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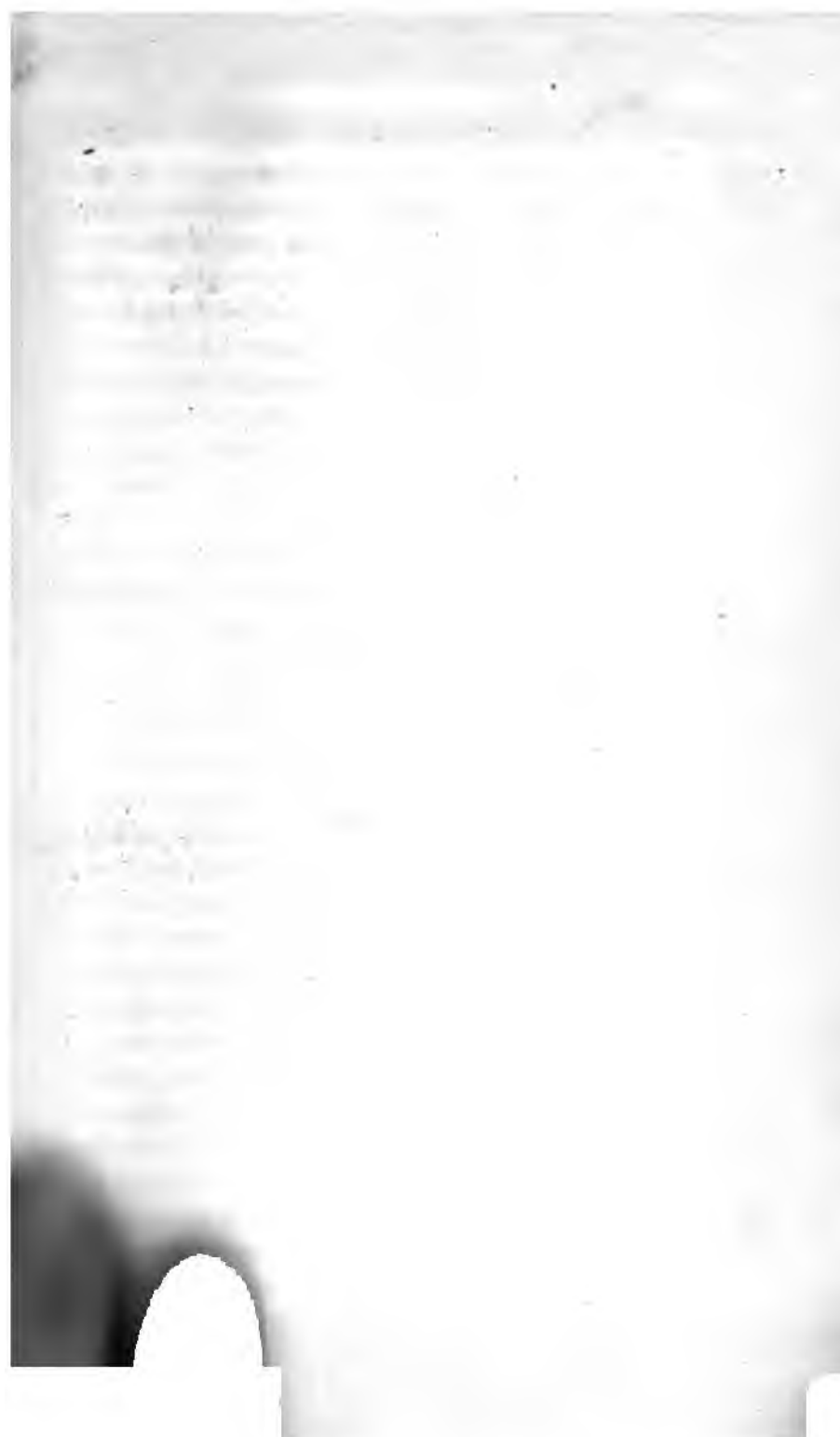
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**LECTURES**  
**ON**  
**SYSTEMATIC MORALITY.**



LECTURES  
ON  
SYSTEMATIC MORALITY

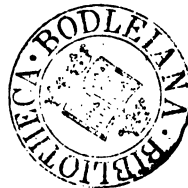
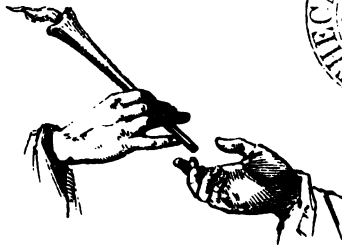
DELIVERED IN LENT TERM, 1846.

BY

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*Λαμπάδια ἔχοντες διαδώσουσιν ἀλλήλοις.*

LONDON:  
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XLVI.



## P R E F A C E.

---

I HAVE stated at the outset of the following Lectures that though I hope they may have an independent interest for some readers, they contain a kind of commentary on some parts of the two volumes on *The Elements of Morality* which I lately published. I gladly take advantage of this opportunity of offering explanations on some of the points treated of in the former volumes; for a further attention to the subject has made me aware of very serious defects which are to be found in the work. I have also endeavoured to remove some objections which may be made to the *Elements of Morality*, but which are, I think, unfounded. Many of the objections thus noticed have appeared in print; but I have not thought it necessary to refer more particularly to the quarters from which they have been urged. It appears to me that in all subjects, the more *impersonal* our controversies can be made, the better they will answer all good ends; and certainly controversies on Morality are most likely in this way to be really moral.

The present volume contains only a part of the Course of Lectures delivered to the University last Term. I hope the Reader will bear in mind that they are to be judged of as Lectures.

TRINITY COLLEGE,  
April 30, 1846.



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## LECTURE I.

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### DEFINITION OF A SYSTEM OF MORALITY.

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I WILL enter upon the Course of Lectures which I have announced, by stating the point which I conceive that I have reached in the treatment of the subject, through my previous courses of lectures, and other tasks connected with those. I was elected in 1838 to the Professorship in virtue of which I now address you. It is described by the founder, Dr. Knightbridge, who founded it by his Will in 1683, as a Professorship of Moral Theology or Casuistry ; but on commencing my lectures in 1839, I declared that I should deal with my office, and speak of it, as a Professorship of Moral Philosophy, in order to accommodate my labours to the needs and the language of our own times. In my first course of lectures, I took, for the most part, an historical view of the subject, directing my survey mainly to the series of English writers on the foundations of Morality ; and I endeavoured to keep especially before my hearers the broad distinction between *independent* and *dependent* systems of Morality ;—independent systems, which look upon moral goodness and rightness as in themselves sufficient and supreme ends of human action ; and dependent systems, which make moral goodness and rightness derive their value and force from their subserviency to some other ulterior end ;—as pleasure, or gain of some kind ; or usefulness for some further purpose. I remarked that among ourselves, from Hobbes to Paley, the latter system has been familiarly current, and has been worked out into detail in a skilful and

lucid manner;—yet that the assent of many of our greatest thinkers has been denied to it, and there has always been a strong body of moralists among us, who have asserted the independence of Morality;—speaking, with Cudworth, of Moral Truth as immutable; or, with Butler, of Conscience as, by its nature, the Sovereign of Desire. I stated, moreover, that though independent morality had thus been vigorously and incessantly asserted as a truth, it had not been worked out into detail as a system;—that moralists had not been found among us who should state plainly *what* Moral Truths are immutable, or *what* are the laws which conscience, in virtue of her sovereign authority, lays down. We have always had a school of independent moralists, but we have not yet had a system of independent morality.

In my courses of lectures in the subsequent years, I repeated and extended the historical sketch which I had at first given; and I dwelt further upon the importance of constructing a system of Independent Morality, as that which alone could be considered a really Moral System. In order to prepare the way for the construction of such a system, I discussed several of the difficulties which lie in the course of such a task, and attempted to point out the mode in which such difficulties are to be solved. In doing this, I was naturally led to draw some of the main lines which mark out a system of Independent Morality. Or rather, I should not have been able to offer to my hearers a consistent series of solutions of the main difficulties and paradoxes of Moral Philosophy, if I had not had, already established in my mind, the leading features of a System of Morality which might show to me the bearing of one part upon another, and of one difficulty upon another. I could not have hoped consistently to solve the perplexities of separate scenes of the drama of Moral Philosophy, if I had not had the *dénouement*

in my head, at least as to its general import. But though I had thus, in a great measure, framed a System of Morality according to what I conceived the true structure of such a system should be, I did not in my lectures deliver it in a systematic form; being withheld partly by the incomplete manner in which I had unfolded several parts of the system; but more, by a conviction that a system, such as I conceived a system ought to be,—excluding all preliminary discussion on each point, and giving only the resulting truths in an exact and ultimate form according to their logical connection,—was not well adapted for delivery in lectures: for in those, the speaker is most willingly listened to, and most readily followed, if he exhibits to his audience the process of untying the knot, and not the smooth connected thread which results from the process, and which hardly retains a trace of the previous entanglement. It seemed to me that a System of Morality was more fitly expounded in a book than in a course of lectures; for in a book, the writer may reject all that is unessential, leaving the reader to supply, by repeated perusal of the rigorous expression of the truth, all the illustration and explanation which is requisite to the hearer of a spoken discourse; and in a book, the reasoning may consist of many links, each depending on the preceding; for the reader, when he comes to a succeeding link, can go back and test the strength of the preceding ones, before he commits himself to the lengthened chain. And thus, rigorous phraseology and protracted reasoning, which are necessary in a system of truths, but which repel and perplex the *hearer*, find their proper place before the reader. The course of lectures which I delivered last year was, indeed, announced as having for its subject *A System of Morality*. But of the system, portions only were given in a systematic form; and these too, were combined with discussions respecting the difficulties which had

been to be solved, before these parts of the system could be constructed.

I now approach the subject under different circumstances from those which attended my former course of Lectures ; for, in the interval which has elapsed since my last year's course, I have published a Book which I have entitled *Elements of Morality*, and which contains the developed exposition of that system which I had in my mind when in previous years I ventured to describe what, according to my views, a system of morality ought to be. That system is now before the world, and accessible to my hearers ; and it is, on that account, unnecessary to expound it here, as well as unsuitable to the nature of lectures, for the reasons I have already mentioned. I shall not in these lectures repeat what I have said in my book ; but the existence of the published book will enable me to treat my subject in a mode different from that which I have hitherto followed, and to carry my discussions further, with regard to several subjects, than I have yet been able to do.

It may still, I think, be useful to give some view, and perhaps some exemplification from literary history, of the difficulties which were to be surmounted in the construction of a system of Independent Morality ; but for the march of the reasoning by which the system proceeds when these difficulties are removed out of its way, I may be permitted to suppose that those who are interested in the subject will refer to what I have printed. And on the other hand, the barenness and conciseness of language which appeared to me to be required in a printed systematic work, leave great room for explanation and illustration ; and for the discussion of cases, and arrangement of details, which naturally come under notice when the main features of a system are considered as firmly established. I am far from expecting my hearers to grant to me, or from myself imagining, that any

published *Elements of Morality* is a perfect and complete work. I have no doubt the book has many and grievous defects and blemishes; some of which I may have it in my power to remove in this course of Lectures, and on future occasions; and others of which will remain when I have laboured again and again, and done the best I can. But the book will at least show, in some degree, what, in my conception, are the scheme and the subjects of a System of Morality. Its contents will serve as texts for a commentary, as examples of reasoning, as indications of topics, as memorandums of principles; and without asking you to attach to it any great importance, it will enable me, I trust, to convey my meaning in a more intelligible manner, on a greater extent of questions, than in previous years it was in my power to do.

I by no means intend to imply that the course of lectures which I am now about to deliver will be unintelligible to those who have not read the book which I have published on Morality; or that any interest which the lectures may have will be lost for such persons. I only wish to state, rather in the way of apology than of requirement, that those who may happen to refer to my book will perhaps find defects supplied which may otherwise appear to belong to these lectures; and may discover more of method and connection than a short series of lectures on so large a subject, can of itself hope to possess. But what I may have to say of the difficulties of Systematic Morality, especially, will I trust be entirely intelligible in its purport, and in its bearing upon moral writers in general, without any reference to my own writings. In this hope I shall proceed to make some remarks on the difficulties which belong to the construction of a System of Morality.

The first difficulty, indeed, which I shall notice is one

which is quite as likely to occur to the minds of those who have not read a treatise of systematic morality as to those who have. It is the repugnance to the thought of a *System of Morality* altogether : whether this repugnance take the shape of a belief that Moral Truth cannot be moulded into a System, or that a System cannot be really Moral in its result : whether the notion of a System of Morality be rejected because a System is something too formal, technical, rigid and dead, for a living, growing, constantly unfolding, body of truth, such as morality is ; or because Morality, to be real, must not be merely a set of doctrines, but an influence upon men's hearts and characters. For undoubtedly many thoughtful men, lovers of morality, have looked with suspicion and dislike on moral systems, on one or both of these accounts ; and this suspicion and dislike prevail especially in our times. The notion of a System of Morality has, I think, in many persons, excited a feeling of aversion and indignation ; as if those who asserted their possession of such a System professed to know everything, in matters where other people lament how imperfect their knowledge is ; as if they professed to know certainly, where others are compelled to hesitate and doubt ; as if they professed to know finally, in a subject of which the essence appears to others to be a continual progression and extension of our knowledge. And again, the moral-system-builder is further disliked and blamed, because he is presumed to make knowledge everything, in a matter in which others consider it far more important what we do and feel, than what we know. I am extremely desirous of putting into words, in their full force, the feelings of dislike and blame to which I point ; for, as I have said, I conceive they are widely diffused among thoughtful men at the present time ; sometimes loudly expressed, sometimes latently entertained ; and it is important, for my purpose, to bring fairly into view,

and so far as they are unfounded, to dissipate these feelings. We are entering upon the task of expounding and applying our Systematic Morality under great disadvantages, if our hearers have, deeply rooted in their minds, a persuasion that because it *is* Systematic it must be worthless:—that the two terms are inconsistent, and that a mode of treating questions which is rigorously Systematic cannot be really Moral. It concerns me much to remove, at the outset of my lectures, this prepossession; and this I trust I shall be able to do, in the minds of those who will give me their attention. A System of Morality, in the way in which I understand the phrase, is quite consistent, as I do not doubt I shall be able to show, with the notion of morality, both as a living and growing body of truth, and as an effective influence on the heart. I confidently expect to satisfy you that the System of Morality of which I have to speak is a System, only in such a sense as is consistent with its being really Moral.

Perhaps to those who entertain no such preconceived suspicion and dislike towards systematic morality, the work of combating such feelings may appear superfluous. They may think that it suffices if the moralist produces a system, for those who want to have a system. They may think, too, that to construct a systematic scheme of morality, is what a professor of the subject is not merely justified in doing, but led and compelled to do, by the example of moralists in all ages, and by the general expectation of those who take an interest in such matters. In trying to frame a body of Morality which aims at being systematically exact and complete, we are working at a problem on which many of the most eminent and admired writers of ancient and modern times have employed their minds. The reasonableness of the attempt, the value of the success so far as it has been attained, have been generally allowed in the cases

of our predecessors ; and surely, it might be said, we ought not to incur suspicion and aversion, for trying to do again what they have done so often with general approbation. We may, it might seem, try to complete, without blame, what they began and carried on with praise. They may have done well, and still have left room for improvement ; and we only claim to be allowed to attempt some of these remaining possible improvements.

But I am not satisfied to make this reply to the persons who are prepossessed against systematic morality : for, in the first place, it would probably produce little effect upon their minds ; since, if they are prepared to reject all systems in our own times, they probably are not among the admirers of systems, or attempts at system, already existing. And indeed it may be that they derive, from the very facts of the number of previously devised moral systems, and the eminence of the philosophers by whom they were constructed, special grounds for the condemnation of all additional attempts of the same kind. They may say that where, for so many ages, in so many trials, men so able and zealous have failed, it is folly and presumption for us to hope to succeed. They may say that the constant recurrence of failure in this path of human thought amid surrounding successes in a thousand other lines of speculation, shews that this is not a direction in which man is destined to speculate to any purpose. They may say that the history of morality shews the futile and untenable nature of moral systems.

How far these facts, and the inference drawn from them, are justly stated by those who deliver this judgment, we shall best see by proceeding at once to explain what we mean by a System of Morality.

But in order to do this effectually, and so that the preliminary difficulty with which I am here dealing, may not constantly flow back upon us through the loose texture

of our original definition, I must necessarily proceed with some precision and rigour, as to the conceptions and convictions which I assume to exist in your minds; and as to the language in which I describe them. In order to shew that we may rightly aim at a rigorous System of Morality, I must define, with some precision, what I mean by a System; and on what view of the human faculties such a system must proceed. I must, for a moment, be more technical and more formally logical than I should generally, in these lectures, pretend to be. And you will, I trust, kindly excuse this formality in our introduction to each other, as a necessary condition of our better acquaintance and continued good understanding.

I must begin by stating one or two propositions, which will, I believe, to most of you, appear self-evident; and which, indeed, are so; but which I state formally, in order that I may afterwards confidently and constantly refer to them, secure that you will at once concede them to me, and will not have again to call up the train of thought by which you become convinced of their truth when they are expressly brought before your minds. It may appear pedantic to treat as separate propositions such elementary truths as I have to speak of; but it is better that I should be pedantic in this way, than that, when hereafter I have occasion to assume these truths, you should hesitate to grant them with full and clear conviction, or should apprehend their meaning only in a dim or wavering manner.

You will, I think, allow that my fears of appearing too formal and cautious are natural, when, after so much preface, I tell you, that the first proposition which I assume, and which I wish you to bear in your minds as firmly established, is, that *there are Moral Truths*. So, however, it is. I am solicitous that you should, from the very first, constantly carry with you the firm conviction and clear

apprehension of this proposition. And I venture to say, that if there be firmly established in your minds, a conviction that there are moral truths, many of the difficulties which arise, respecting morality in general, will vanish of themselves, or will be easily removed.

Perhaps the best way of illustrating this doctrine, that there are Moral Truths, is by mentioning some of the most simple and familiar propositions of this kind, which are commonly delivered and assented to by men, both on practical occasions, and in the course of speculative discussions. Of this kind are the following.—That murder, theft, robbery, adultery, are wrong. That breach of promise is wrong. That a man cannot liberate himself from the obligation of his own promise. That it is wrong to treat a person as a mere thing. That we must, in general, recognize the authority of the Law of the Land. That the Law ought to conform to Justice. That when a man acts against his conscience, his act is morally wrong. *Of this kind*, I say, are Moral Truths. I do not say that all these are certainly Moral Truths. I do not say this *at present*, at least. Still less do I say that all these propositions are evidently true; or that they do not admit of limitations and exceptions. But I say that there are Moral Truths *of this kind*. If any of those which I have enumerated be not exactly true, or not true without exception, then there are corrections of them which *are* the Truths at which I point;—then the proposition properly limited by exception is such a Truth as I mean. Every body, upon every occasion in which man's moral nature comes into question,—and what occasion is unconnected with man's moral nature?—every man, I say, upon every occasion, is ready to utter and to assent to propositions such as these; if not exactly these, still *such* as these. And I say, that this perpetual enunciation and acceptance of such propositions implies, and makes

it indisputably certain, that they have in them a substantial truth. The circulation of this coin of moral maxims, which goes on through all the business of life, and for which men of all ranks and characters, in all ages and nations, have readily given and taken all objects of desire, happiness and misery, life and death;—this could not have gone on, if this current coin had had no value;—if these moral maxims had had no real meaning;—if they had been empty words corresponding to no truth in our souls. We feel indeed, in our souls, in the very depth of our nature, that such maxims are true;—that, if this be not so,—if nothing of this kind be true, nothing of any kind is true. If there be no *moral* Truth, there is *no* Truth. If Right and Wrong, Obligation and Duty, Veracity and Justice, Virtue and Conscience, be not things concerning which Truths can be asserted, then there can be no truths asserted;—not to say, as we might say, that if there were truths attainable on other subjects, excluding these, such truths would be of little or no value or interest for us. These words, or such as these, the vocabulary of morality, are a language in which Truths may be enunciated; such Truths concern all men, far more than any other Truths can; and what I have especially now to impress upon you is, that these Truths, or such Truths as these, are the truths which concern us as moralists; and that, bearing steadily in our minds that there are such truths,—that there is a body of such truth,—we shall soon get over the difficulty of seeing what our duty as speculative moralists is.

If I seem to any of you to labour with superfluous emphasis on a doctrine so plain and undeniable, I can only say, that it is most important to our future progress that this doctrine should be plain and unquestioned in our minds; and that I could wish at once to say all that is requisite, that it may remain so for ever. I shall, therefore, henceforth

suppose that, in all our future discussions, you will carry with you a conviction that there are Moral Truths; and indeed, after the examples I have given, which you will easily see, might be very greatly multiplied, I shall suppose you to be convinced that there exists a great multitude of Moral Truths; which, collected in some way or other, may make a great body of Moral Truth. And supposing you fully possessed by this conviction, I have another proposition to state, equally elementary, equally important, and therefore necessarily to be insisted upon now, with a degree of earnestness which its simplicity may seem to make superfluous.

My Second Proposition is, that Moral Truths ought to be expressed in a permanent and definite form. And this again will probably be by most of you conceded as evident of itself: for in our very idea of Truth is included the supposition of its being always true, and always true in the same sense. If our enunciations of Moral Truths, or of what profess to be such, are received sometimes as true and sometimes as false;—if we ourselves sometimes accept a maxim with full conviction, and then, on another occasion, reject its application:—this variability must depend, either upon some looseness or ambiguity in these expressions, or else on some confusion or tumult in the mind, which prevents our seeing the Truth as it really is. Now the former of these cases, laxity and ambiguity of expression,—is a fault, a blemish; and ought to be got rid of in our moral speculations. The terms in which we express moral truths ought to be so selected, so fixed, and so applied, that they always mean the same thing: so that what is by them expressed truly at one time, shall be true at all times, because it is always the same Truth. I say that the words of our moral vocabulary ought to be made thus definite and constant in their meaning. I do not now say how this

definiteness and constancy are to be obtained. I do not say that it is to be secured by definitions, or in any other prescribed way. How moral terms are to be made fixed and definite in their signification, we shall hereafter have to consider. But this I say, as that which I suppose you will all concede;—as a concession on which I shall build in future;—that such fixity and definiteness of moral language are to be aimed at in moral teaching. That we are not to rest satisfied with lax or ambiguous phraseology, which we see to be such;—that our words must have settled and precise meanings;—that moral truths, which, as I have said, you are convinced, in your minds, really do exist, ought to be enunciated in language fitted and permanently appropriated to include Truth and to exclude falsehood. Such fitness, such appropriation, must be an object which the moral writer or teacher has in view. You must allow me, at every step of our progress, to take for granted that this object,—this definiteness and permanence in the expression of moral truths,—is an object at which I ought to aim, and which you, as much as I, ought to wish to see attained by me.

You may be ready to say, that this must be granted by all,—that all must allow that such definiteness and permanence are proper, and indispensable objects and aims of a moral teacher if his teaching is to have any permanent value. Nor do I mean to doubt that this will be granted me by all who hear me; and that you all do wish that my language should be definite and consistent, and think that I ought to try to make it so. But though you may all allow that this is a fit object, and a suitable condition, of a moralist's teaching, you will all, I think, be able to testify, upon consulting your recollection, that this condition has not always been complied with, nor even always, it would seem, aimed at as a necessary object. You will all,

I think, be able to recollect statements and discussions on moral subjects, in which words were used very loosely and waveringly; and in which no serious or persevering attempt seemed to be made to render them otherwise. I do not say that such imperfections of phraseology in moral writings are not difficult to avoid. I do not say that the indolence or levity which shrinks from the labour requisite for the use of exact and definite language on such subjects, is not natural. But I say that we are not to acquiesce in these defects, or in an impatience of the labour which may be needed to avoid or remove them. I say that if other moralists have written or talked loosely and ambiguously, we are not to be content with following their examples. I say that whoever they were, who, on moral subjects, used vague and variable expressions; so that what was true at one moment, by a little shift of thought, ceased to be true at another moment; we are to avoid imitating them in this habit. Even if persuasive writers, eloquent men, great philosophers, celebrated moralists, have treated of morals in such a way that their readers or hearers had not, by the structure of their language, a firm and steady hold upon the moral truths which they taught; we are, in this respect, to try to do better than they did. We are to try to be definite and stable in our use of terms, however great were the men who were otherwise. If they have brought to men's notice valuable truths, shrouded in their dim and fluctuating forms of expression, we may accept the truths, but, for the purposes of our morality, we must endeavour to clothe them in a more fitting and unchanging vesture. We must aim at finding, for such Moral Truths, definite and permanent expressions.

Of course, I need hardly say, to avoid being misunderstood, that that which is valuable for our purpose is, not the expression, but the truth; not the clothing, but the body.

We wish to have moral truths expressed in fixed forms;—*formulae*, if any one chooses so to call the Moral Truths which I have given as examples. But that which is needed for our purpose is, the *substantia*—the substantial truth, first; and then the *formula*, as a means of possessing and preserving the truth. The term *formula* is sometimes used so as to imply the opposite of this;—the form *without* the substance,—the words without the apprehension of the truth. In that sense, a formula is not what we want: but in whatever manner we enunciate the doctrine, we must, in what follows, assume, as I have said, that the Moralist ought to express Moral Truths in definite and permanent terms.

The Moralist gives to the truth a definite and fixed expression, in order that the truth itself may be permanent;—in order that it may abide in men's minds, and be acknowledged to be true whenever it is enunciated. Yet it may be well for us to recollect, that no expression can bind the conviction of men, in bonds which can never be broken; no mode of stating moral truth can be so cogent, that men shall never deny it; no form can cling so close to substance, that it may not, at some time, and in some circumstances, become an empty formula. For instance, under the influence of strong desire, or passion, or bewildering trains of thought, men do not acknowledge the moral truths which are most plain and universally accepted; such as are expressed by the Laws, *Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not bear false witness.* I do not mean merely that men *in act* violate those laws; but that in thought they deny them; either questioning their general truth, or their application to some particular case where a calm and clear mind could entertain no doubt. This, I say, may be done, however definite and clear be the language which the Moralist uses. There is, in passion and

desire, a sophistry sometimes, sometimes a perplexity and confusion of thought, which may fail to see and to acknowledge the most palpable truths of Morality, however exactly and plainly expressed ; and which rejects their application in the plainest instances. Under the influence of the passions, men may easily come to think that the solemn Forms of Law, which I have mentioned : *Thou shalt not kill ; Thou shalt not steal ; Thou shalt not commit adultery ; Thou shalt not bear false witness*, are empty Formulæ. And still more is this the case, when we come to the larger and higher doctrines of Morality, in which more general and abstract terms are necessarily employed. It is not easy to enunciate truths respecting the great names of Justice and Humanity, Conscience and Virtue, in such a manner that men, in the heat of passion, or in the maze of thoughts and words, shall not reject or mistake them.

But still I say that, so far as this danger depends upon the loose and ambiguous use of moral terms, upon which in a great measure it does depend, it is the Moralist's business to avoid it. If he cannot frame his language so that extreme perplexity and confusion of mind may not fail to take hold of his meaning, as well as vehement passion refuse to be guided by it ; he ought, at least, so to frame his statements that *nothing but* great perplexity and confusion of mind shall fail to seize and to hold his meaning ;—so that to any common apprehension, with a reasonable attention to the explanation given, his language shall always and exactly express Moral Truths ;—shall do this because it is well selected for that very purpose, and consistently used with a view to it.

There is yet one other proposition which I must state as one which I have to assume ; and when that is done, I shall be in a condition to explain and justify my attempt to expound to you a System of Morality. I must assume, not

only that there are such moral truths as I have described, and that they ought to be expressed in definite language; but that such moral truths are rationally connected one with the other;—that one moral truth depends upon another, in a manner which we can apprehend by our reason, and express by reasoning. This is an important point; but it is no less evident to common apprehension than the other points on which I have already insisted. For have not all moral writers and teachers, in all ages, been employed in showing, by reasoning and by appeals to reason, the connection and dependence of moral truths upon one another? the mode in which particular duties are deduced from general moral principles, or in which general doctrines are inferred as general results of particular obligations? And can we suppose that all these reasonings, all these appeals, all these applications and inferences, have been futile and unmeaning; and that there is not really any such connection of principles and of cases one with another, as such writers and teachers have assumed? We shall, I suppose, none of us thus assume that all the arguments and inferences and reasonings of Moralists, in all ages and countries, are thus destitute of significance and validity. And moreover it is not in the writings of Moralists only, that we find such arguments and inferences and reasonings. A large part of the business of the world, I might say the largest, is made up of the like materials. The Legislator in the Senate gives his reasons for laws;—moral reasons for moral rules. The Advocate reasons in behalf of his client, or the Litigant on his own behalf; he gives reasons to show that his claim is just, is equitable;—in short, is right and agreeable to morality. The Judge pronounces his decision, and gives his reasons for his opinion;—reasons which exhibit his sentence as the result of Law, Law being the more defined form of Justice. All these reasonings, all this pleading and pro-

nouncing, assume the connection,—the rational connection—of moral truths one with another ;—of the truths which the speaker wishes to establish, with the truths which he supposes his hearers already to have accepted. And even on less formal occasions,—even in the intercourse of daily life,—are we not perpetually trying to convince each other, or receiving conviction from each other, with regard to right and wrong? Is it not by thus appealing to each other's reason, and bringing before the reason the connection of one moral truth with another, and the application of moral principles to moral questions, that we guide, and are guided; persuade, and are persuaded; move, and are moved? Is not this really the main intercourse of man with man? Is not the web of human life woven by the constant intertexture of such threads as these? Is not this human action, and the spring of human action? And further, if we are not satisfied to look at and listen to human teaching merely, does not Divine Teaching still take the same course? Do not the teachers, both of the Old and the New Dispensation, reason with men, concerning their sins, their prospects, their moral dangers, fears, and hopes?—referring, no doubt, to the Divine Authority as a supreme principle of Morality; which, in the eye of all true Morality, it is; but also, showing the connection between other principles with this supreme principle, and with each other. And does not the same Divine Teaching expressly and perpetually refer to the reason of man, and to his understanding, as the faculties by which he is to discern his duty and his condition? Wherever we look, in this world of thought and action with which man is most concerned, we find all things bound together by a network of moral connections. In assuming that there are such connections,—that moral realities, moral relations, moral truths, are connected with each other,—we assume only *that* which we cannot for a moment cease to assume.

And the threads of these connections are apprehended by man's reason, and made visible in words by reasoning.

I do not know whether this assertion of the place which reason must have in morality, will still be received by any of you with a shade of hesitation and reserve, because you have been accustomed to such assertions as these;—that morality is a matter of feeling, and not of reasoning; that its proper seat is the heart, not the head; that we are best guided by conscience, not by reason. All these assertions are true, when properly understood and properly limited; but then, the due intelligence and due limitation of them renders them consistent with what we have said,—that there is, among moral truths, a connection apprehended by the reason. For feeling is not moral feeling, if it exclude the operation of the human faculty, the Reason: the seat of morality is in the heart, only so long as the heart keeps up a connection with the head: the true guide of man is Conscience, only so long as the guide of Conscience is Reason. Feeling, and Emotion, and Opinion, when they become irrational, do not continue to make men's actions moral. Human Feeling, and Emotion, and Opinion, when they are so far human as to be moral, necessarily involve some operation of thought, and some rational connection of truths, expressed or implied, manifest or latent, evident or obscure. It is, true, that the rational connection thus involved may be merely implied, latent and obscure: it may not be exhibited in words, or traced out in steps of reasoning: and men, so long as their moral view is thus dim, may say that morality is not a matter of reasoning:—but this is so only till the moralist has put in words that which was before felt; till he has traced the course of conviction which before was assumed. This is the moralist's business; and the business of every one, so far as he is reasonable, that is, so far as he is human. A man has his internal moral convictions in

virtue of his human nature, and of his human reason, as one of the faculties of his human nature. The truths of which these convictions take hold, are truths of which the certainty and connections are apprehended by the reason; and this evidence may be unfolded into words by unfolding the reason. This it is the moralist's business to do. He must tell us explicitly what, as human beings, capable of moral thought, we feel implicitly. He must reflect to us our own thoughts, and put before us principles which we acknowledge to be such as we really have within us. The moralist, as well as the poet, must give us back the image of our mind. He must show to us the connections of moral truths which had governed our thoughts, though we had not unfolded them into reasonings. He must assist our vision so that we may see the moral net-work by which all things, in this our human world, are connected. He must enable us to discern the very threads, the warp and the woof, of the web of human life. He must thus make that a matter of reasoning which is necessarily a matter of reason. He must make that a matter of just reasoning, which is necessarily, and from the first, the work of rational creatures, and of men aiming to act reasonably. And thus, there is no force in such expressions as I have referred to, that morality is not a matter of reasoning, and the like;—no force to invalidate the force of what I have asserted as a necessary preliminary to the account I have to give of our System of Morality:—namely, that moral truths are rationally connected.

And now, having, as I trust, established to your satisfaction these three points:—that there exist Moral Truths; that such Truths may be and ought to be expressed in a definite and permanent manner; and that such truths are rationally connected with each other:—I have already placed before you what I understand by a *System of Mo-*

*rality* : for by such a System, I understand nothing more nor less than what I have thus described ;—*a Body of Moral Truths, definitely expressed and rationally connected.* This is the system which I mean, when I speak of a system, and which I would wish to construct ; or rather, of which I could wish to aid in the construction : for I do not judge so ill of the past as to believe that nothing has yet been done in this work ; nor deem so well of the present as to suppose that nothing will remain to be done when we have done our best. But placing before you this Idea of a Moral System, I would endeavour to frame something which may correspond with it ; and the notion of a System being thus explained, I hope you will see nothing but what is both reasonable and hopeful in the attempt to realize such an Idea.

I think, also, you will perceive that this way of understanding the meaning of a System of Morality removes at once some of the objections which I have already pointed at, as sometimes urged against Moral Systems in general. For a System being so understood, you will not say that nothing has yet been done hitherto, in framing a System, and that therefore you despair of ever seeing a System constructed. In framing such a System, much has been done in every age. All the moral reasonings, not only of Moralists, but of Statesmen, Judges, Lawyers, Teachers of all kinds, Advisers, Friends, so far as they have been really right and good, have been consistent with the system ; —have been parts of the system ; and when the system is constructed in its full proportions, will find their place in it. What we have to do, is, to arrange these already existing materials ; to mark their connection, and their derivation from one another ; and to supply what is wanting. And again, the objection that a system is a thing too dry and hard and formal to be consistent with real morality, is, under the view now presented, easily answered : for, in such

a system as we contemplate, all the most forcible and most persuasive expressions of moral truths which have ever been uttered are included ; the only conditions which limit their introduction, being, that they shall be definitely expressed, and their connection with each other, and with other moral truths, brought into view ;—conditions which must rather add to than diminish the force and beauty of moral truths. We do not want a system which shall reject the common ways of expressing moral truths, and substitute something in their stead which may, by comparison, be called feeble and rigid and pedantic ;—we want to adopt all the commonest and plainest modes of expressing moral truths ; excluding only such as are too vague to convey a steady meaning, or to admit of reasonable discussion. If such a Moral System as we desire can be constructed, each part will be so simple that it may be in danger of being called common-place ; while, by the connection of the system, these common-places will lead to the solution of the most weighty moral problems.

Perhaps I may, before quitting the subject, say a word respecting the other objection which I mentioned as sometimes urged against Systems of Morality in general ;—namely, that they only occupy the intellect, and do not influence the feelings and govern the actions.

This objection also is, in a great degree, removed by what has already been said ;—that the feelings which lead to action are so far connected with the intellect, that our perception of moral truth, when it is really the perception of truth *as* truth, that is, conviction, produces a great effect upon the dispositions which govern men's actions. To teach men what is good and right, just and humane, is to do something which has a very great effect in directing their actions. If it be said that, though they know what is

right, they may do what is wrong; *that* is true; but certainly, this truth does not make it a matter of no consequence to teach them what is right. It only shews that, when we have done that, there is still another task to be performed. When the moralist has taught men what is right, he has to induce men to act in consistency with their knowledge;—to incite them to make their being consistent with itself;—to make themselves truly reasonable creatures. It may be—it will often be—that his efforts to do this fail. It may be that he finds this a task which requires powers beyond those which he possesses. It may be, that he finds that man's nature in practical matters, will not yield to the mere human force of Morality, and requires the more powerful engine of Religion. This may be so: but that this is so, does not supersede the value of the first part of the task; which, so far as it can be performed by the light of reason, is the office of Morality. Indeed, inasmuch as Religion is needed, not only to induce men to do what is right, when they know what is so, but also to teach them what *is* right, in cases where the light of reason is doubtful or imperfect, Religion itself belongs to the domain of the moralist; and with this for a province of his subject, it can no longer be charged against him that he has only the office of telling men what they ought to do, without having any sufficient means of urging them to do it. If he is allowed to have recourse to Religion for this purpose, he can do all that human powers can do, in the way of directing men's conduct. But then, with this extension of his province, he must still divide his teaching into two parts;—*what* men ought to do; and *why* they should do it. And the former of these is Morality, and so far as it borrows light from Religion, it is Religious Morality. But there is in this no reason why it should not also be Systematic Morality. There is still no reason why the moral truths which are taught should not

be definitely expressed, and arranged according to their rational connection; including, among the most important lines of such connection, their connection with the Divine Will and the Divine Commands. Religion may give new aspects, new foundations, new bearings to moral Truths; but she cannot, by doing this, make it less natural that we should wish to see them wearing a distinct aspect, resting upon their real foundations, arranged according to their true bearings. This is what man must desire, as a rational creature,—capable of thinking as well as acting, possessing speculative, as well as practical reason,—wishing to see Truth, as well as to obey Truth. This man necessarily desires. Without this, he cannot be satisfied. He must have Truth, speculative Truth, distinct vision, orderly connection. To these objects he tends; and as the point to which he is thus directed, we wish to place before him a System such as we have described; *A Body of Moral Truths, definitely expressed, and arranged according to their rational connection.*

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## LECTURE II.

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### OF FIRST PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY.

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IN the Lecture which I have already delivered this term, I spoke of a System of Morality, as a subject which I should bring prominently before you in the remaining course of my lectures: and, referring to the objections which may be made to Systems of Morality, I considered especially certain objections which are sometimes made to Systems of Morality in general, and which may be urged against *every* such System, without any reference to its peculiar features, and without any examination of it at all. Such objections are these;—that Systems are schemes so dry and formal that Morality cannot be truly exhibited in such a shape; and again, that moral systems produce no effect upon the conduct. In order to reply to these objections, I explained what I mean by a System of Morality. I described such a System, according to the way in which I employ the term, as denoting *A Body of Moral Truths, definitely expressed, and arranged according to their rational connection*. And in order that this description of a System of Morality might be fully understood and fully accepted, I endeavoured to bring clearly before you, as matters of distinct apprehension and solid conviction, three principles which my description of such a system assumes; namely, that there *are* Moral Truths; that such truths may be and ought to be *definitely expressed*; and that moral truths are *rationally connected* with each other. If I succeeded in establishing in your minds a clear conviction of these fundamental principles, you

will make no difficulty in allowing me to proceed upon the Idea of a System of Morality, such as I have placed it before you. Whatever other meanings may have been assigned to the term *System*, and whatever objections may lie against Systems so understood, with these objections I have no concern. If I can frame a System according to the view which I have presented to you, I shall have performed the task which I have placed before myself; and I think you will agree with me, that I have done something which is likely to have some interest and value for all who attend to moral questions. I shall now, therefore, go on to consider some of the consequences of the description of a Moral System which I have given you. I shall point out some properties which such a system must have, some conditions to which it must conform. We shall, in this way, be led to discussions of some matters which are leading points of moral philosophy, according to all the ways in which the subject is treated.

I have said that we aim at a System of Morality in which Moral Truths shall be definitely expressed; which definiteness of expression is, indeed, necessary, in order that we may, in any exact or demonstrative manner, derive one proposition from another. And we are naturally led to ask, how is this definiteness in the expression of Moral Truths to be attained? Are we to fix the meaning of our terms by means of Definitions? But if we do this, what other terms can we find, in which to give our Definitions? The terms which we use in the expression of moral judgments are all the most familiar and simple words in the language. These terms, it is true, may be, in many cases, vague and loose in their common use; but we shall hardly succeed in finding any other vocabulary in which we may define the meaning of these words, so as to fix and circumscribe it more exactly. The signification of the moral

phrases which are in common currency may not be exactly known ; but it will be difficult, or impossible, to find anything better known, by which we may illuminate this obscurity. The terms which universally and unavoidably occur in enunciating moral doctrines, cannot easily be explained by means of any others, more simple or more precise. *Right* and *Wrong* ; *Virtue* and *Vice* ; what we *ought* and *ought not* to do ; *Conscience* and *Reason* ; *Will* and *Action* ; *Thoughts* and *Desires* ;—these, and such as these, are the words which we use, and necessarily must use, in attempting to deliver Moral Truths ; and of such words as these, it will not be easy to describe the meaning in any other, certainly not in any more simple or more familiar words. Yet these words are often used very loosely and vaguely ; and we, by the very object which we place before us, require to have this looseness and vagueness replaced by definiteness and precision. What then is our resource ? What course can we take, in order that we may have any hope of realizing our Idea of a System ?

I will describe to you the only course by which it appears to me possible to avoid the difficulty thus brought before us. We have no other vocabulary than the common familiar vocabulary of mankind, in which we can define the meanings of the moral terms which we use. We must employ such terms as I have mentioned, in their common sense, and must *suppose* their familiar sense to be known ; because if we do not suppose this, we have no language at our command, in which we can make this familiar sense of moral terms known. But we need not take, along with the common apprehension of the sense of such terms, the vagueness and ambiguity which in some cases are also common, among those who use such terms. We may explain the meaning of such terms *by one another*, and may exclude all meanings which are inconsistent with such a *reciprocal* explanation. We

may point out vagueness and ambiguity when they occur in the use of simple moral terms, and may teach our hearers to avoid those faults. We may make it our business to discover and point out the *assumptions* that are involved in the common use of moral terms; and by stating these assumptions distinctly, may duly limit the use of the terms, and may also obtain principles which must enter into our moral reasonings. We must, in short, adopt the usual words current among men, in their usual sense; only *limiting* and *fixing* the usual sense, so that the words may express truth in a *consistent* manner. And we must note the suppositions which are introduced into our system by the introduction of each term; for these suppositions will take their places among the First Principles of reasoning which, as we shall soon see, we must necessarily have, as a basis for our System.

Now the account thus given of the mode of procedure which we must adopt, will enable us to answer several of the questions, and, I think, to remove several of the difficulties, which are often urged to moralists, as standing in the way of such Moral Systems as have been propounded; and which would indeed be fatal to the formation of any moral system whatever. "You moral-system-makers," say the objectors, "pretend to divide man and his doings into a number of portions and provinces, parts and elements, where *we* can see no separation. You distinguish in him Faculties of Reason and Imagination, Desire and Will, and various Desires, as Desire of Property, of Pleasure, of Power. But all this artificial division is altogether fallacious. The man is not many, but one. It is not his *Faculties* which act and live, but the man *himself*. *He* reasons and *he* imagines; and he can discern in himself no separate faculties of Reason and Imagination. *He* Desires and Wills, and is not *moved by* Desire and Will, as something distinct from himself. He desires property and

pleasure and power, and is not a machine impelled this way or that, as one of these supposed springs of action or another is stronger." This, and more of the same kind, is often said ; and it is well that we should, before going further, at once give our answer to it, and liberate our system from any supposed dependence on the false assumption thus assailed.

I reply, therefore, that when we speak of Reason and Imagination, Desire and Will, and the like, we do not assume any separation of Faculties from the Man himself ; but we employ these as convenient modes of speaking of what the Man himself does. We no more, in our system, assume any such separation, than every one, in the use of common language, assumes such a separation. If Reason and Imagination are not rightly called separate Faculties of the mind, they at least designate very different *classes of operations* ; and as common language has found no means of expressing this, better than framing the abstract terms *Reason* and *Imagination*, and ascribing to them processes, it is not likely that the Moralist can find any better means. The Moralist has got to say the same things which the Senator, the Judge, the Parent or the Friend has to say, when he recommends that Reason should govern Appetite, that Conscience should control Desire : and he cannot reasonably be debarred from saying these things in the same language. If indeed he *do* make any false assumption of a separation of Faculties, such as does not exist, and if this false assumption enter into his reasonings, by all means let this fallacy be pointed out, and let all that depends upon it be rejected. But if—when all other men who speak on matters of Morality are allowed to talk of various Appetites and Desires, as the Springs of Human Action, of Reason and Conscience, as his Guides, and of the conflicts of the various elements of his nature,—the Moralist is not allowed to use such language, however carefully he guard it

from any variability in its application, or any inference from its metaphors;—it is plain that, while he is thus prohibited the use of the most familiar expressions of his own language, he is precluded, by this prohibition, from all possibility of executing that which we have spoken of as his peculiar task,—the construction of a system of Moral Truths, expressed in the terms commonly current, only avoiding all indefiniteness in the use of such terms.

I shall, therefore, take for granted that you have dismissed any scruples which you may have had with regard to doctrines and reasonings in which the different Faculties of the Mind and the different Springs of Action are spoken of; as Reason, Appetite, Desire, Affection. Anything which is expressed by means of these abstract terms may be understood, if you so please, by supposing them to imply not Faculties, or Forces, but Classes of internal operations. To attempt to avoid the use of such terms would make our language entirely different from that which men commonly employ on such subjects. I do not know whether, under such limitations, any System of Morality could be constructed. Probably not: and if constructed, it would probably be universally rejected as unintelligible. But at any rate such limitations would render impossible such a system as I have in view, because they would render impossible the most simple statement of the most familiar moral truths.

Again: I proceed to another of the conditions to which our System was to be subject.

In speaking of our Moral System as a Body of Moral Truths, definitely expressed and rationally connected, you would perceive that the rational connection of which I spoke,—that which I presented in my explanation, and referred to in my argument,—was a connection by reasoning; a *logical* connection, as it is often called;—a con-

nection in which one step leads to another by logical inference;—in which premises so lead to conclusions. Thus, to take examples;—if I establish, as the result of the nature of a promise, that the promiser cannot liberate himself from the obligation of his promise; I may hence infer that a man is not absolved from his promise by a *mental reservation* in making it; for if he were, he would, by his own act, get rid of the obligation. Or again, if I establish, as a result of previous reasonings, that it is immoral to treat a person as a mere thing; I infer that *slavery* is immoral, since slaves are treated as things, and not as persons. And not only is one moral truth inferred from others by *one* or *two* steps of this kind; but there may be, upon moral questions, trains of reasoning of considerable length and complexity. Such occur, for instance, among jurists, when complex and contested questions of equity are to be decided; for equity is a branch of morality, as well as of law. Such long trains of reasoning, again,—arguments ascending up to their point by many successive steps of reasoning,—often occur among legislators, who have to decide large questions of polity, depending upon past events and existing institutions; for the multiplied bearings of such events and institutions may necessarily introduce into the reasoning many conditions; and the true result cannot be arrived at, without combining all these. And such questions of polity are also questions of morality; for the question is what the State, and the Legislator, *ought* to do. Even in questions of private conduct, it may often be necessary to take into account many circumstances, in order to act rightly. And though a person may often, or usually, or even universally, choose the right course of action, without stating in a logical manner the way in which his conduct is determined by the circumstances, and the share which each of the existing conditions has in regulating it; yet the Moralist, who has not only to act, but to

teach,—who has not only to act in a single case, but to lay down rules for classes of cases,—must trace the effect of circumstances and conditions in express terms, and by rational consequences. And thus, in every department of Morality, as a scheme of rational teaching, there are long trains of consequences, by which one proposition is established upon another, as its basis; and a third, upon the one thus established; and so on: so that, in such a System of Morality as I have spoken of, in which moral truths are presented according to their rational connection, there must be many propositions, of which the succeeding refer to the preceding, for the elements of proof; and these, again, to others preceding, and so on.

Now I wish you to consider particularly a consequence which follows from this Structure of a System of Morality, such as I have described. Since the later propositions which occur in the System refer to the earlier for the steps of their proof; and these, again, to others earlier still; and so on; what shall we have to refer to at last? It is evident that, in such a System, we must, by going backwards from point to point, at length arrive at some *First Principles*, from which the whole reasoning proceeds. All reasoning being, as the logicians remark, *ex præcognitiis aut præconcessis*,—from what is known as true, or from what is granted as true,—we must, when we trace reasoning backwards, arrive at some first knowledge, or some first concession,—some *Axioms* or *Postulates*, as we may call them,—on which the whole fabric of the reasoning rests. *What* are the Axioms and the Postulates of Morality in our System, we must hereafter specially consider; but without any such special considerations, it is plain that there must be, in Morality, Axioms and Postulates; or at least, Truths which resemble Axioms and Postulates in being the First Principles of Reasoning; if our system is to be, what we described it to be in Idea, a

body of Moral Truths presented according to their rational connection.

But perhaps some persons may be disposed to say that we have, in this result, a proof that our Scheme is unsuited to the subject;—that we can never attain to such a system as we have stated ourselves to have in view. For, it may be said, there are not, in moral subjects, a set of Axioms, or of Postulates with axiomatic self-evidence, which we can thus take as a basis, and on which we can thus build. It may be said that there are, in this subject, no self-evident principles; for there are none which commend themselves, as soon as uttered, to the assent of all men, in spite of prejudices of education, country, interest, and the like. Those which are delivered as the most clear and universal of Moral Principles are not at once and by all clearly seen; such principles, for instance, as that *we must fulfil our promises*; that *we must give to each man his own*; that *we must love men as men*. If any moral principles are self-evident, these, it may be said, are so. If our moral system is to be built up from first principles by reasoning, we shall hardly find more axiomatic propositions than these, to build upon. Yet how can we, it may be asked, say that these principles are axiomatic? Have not men been, through many ages, and are not men still, in many countries, quite insensible to the evidence of these principles? Have not men often held that it is not necessary to fulfil promises made to our enemies? that it is even wise to deceive men who are such? Have not men often held that those who have the power may take the possessions of others, and even that it is glorious to do so? Have not men, instead of acknowledging all men as fit objects of love, taught that they must love their friends indeed, but also, that they must hate their enemies? How can such principles as have been mentioned be said to be evident to all mankind? If we go to the bulk

of mankind, and take from them, at hazard, a promiscuous Jury, are we not as likely to find those who deny, as those who assent to, the supposed self-evident propositions, which we propound to them? How then can we ever have a system of morals which is based upon self-evident principles,—the problem which I have spoken of as that which the Moralist has to solve?

In reply to this, I say at once, that if we are to have any coherence or consistency in our moral views,—I do not say, any such system as I have proposed, but any coherence or consistency at all in our moral views,—we must reject, as any mode of arriving at truth, or any test of self-evidence, such a process as has been referred to;—the taking a *promiscuous Jury* from the mass of mankind. It is certain that we could not, by such a process, obtain any principles which we could make the basis of a solid system of morals;—for this plain reason, that the principles which would be confirmed by the assent of such a Jury might be quite different if it were taken to-day, and to-morrow;—quite different if taken on this side of a river, or that;—quite different if taken among men under the influence of prevailing anger, or prevailing fear. To expect to obtain moral axioms by referring the question to a Jury of savages, or of men nearly approaching to savages in prejudice, ignorance, or passion, would certainly be a very wild expectation; and I hope it will not be considered a defect in any moral system to which we may be led, that it does not satisfy such an expectation as this. The notion that an appeal to such a Jury is the way to test moral axioms, is something like Paley's proposal of bringing the narrative of an atrocious crime before Peter, the wild boy, who was bred up, or rather grew up, like a wild beast; and of doing this, in order to discern whether man has a natural abhorrence of crime. Paley himself points out the difficulty which makes

such an experiment impossible—"If," he says, "he could be made to understand the story." But it is evident that he *could not* be made to understand the story, except by growing up as a man among men, and ceasing to be a wild boy. And in like manner, we must say of a supposed promiscuous jury of men, by whom you would test our moral axioms:—If these men are so savage, and ignorant, and passionate, as to have in them the attributes of men imperfectly unfolded, they cannot tell you what moral truths are evident to man as man. You will say, perhaps, that you merely suppose them so far savage, as to be free from the acquired prejudices of civilized nations, and the teaching of artificial moral systems; and you may say, that if this be so, their agreement in what is true, will be the result and the evidence of the truth;—that on this supposition, such a discrepancy of different Juries as we have supposed would not occur. And here, indeed, we do come in view of an approach to agreement; for if we reject from man's being the passion and ignorance and prejudice which draw their moral convictions different and opposite ways, we may certainly come to some central truths in which they all agree. But then, while we do this, our Jury ceases to be promiscuous. It becomes a Jury of men *as men*. If we suppose men to agree in determining what is self-evident, in virtue of such qualifications, we must suppose that we have some means of deciding what is prejudice and ignorance and passion;—some way besides merely picking up twelve men, or twelve million men, by chance, and asking them their opinion. To test self-evidence by the casual opinion of individual men, is a self-contradiction: to test the necessary moral principles of humanity by the convictions of man as man, is the necessary mode of obtaining solid moral truth.

But again: with regard to such principles as I have above stated:—*that promises are to be performed;—that each is to have his own;—that man is to be loved as man:—* I presume it will not be denied that, whether these are *first* and *axiomatic* truths or not, at least they *are* truths. If they are not self-evident, at least they are true. And they are truths of a very large and comprehensive kind, from which a great many conclusions may fairly and logically be drawn. In going back from the more complex and particular moral truths which we know, to the principles on which they rest and from which they are inferred, we find these, and such as these, when we come near the foundation. If not *First* Principles, they are at least *Fundamental* Principles. Now this is much; and is indeed all we need for the formation of a moral system, or at least, of a large part of a moral system, such as I have described. If these Principles, and such as these, are true, and known by all of us to be true, let us build onwards from these, and we shall have a portion, at least, of the fabric which we seek to raise. If these Principles are not First Principles, let others try to explore what comes before them. If these are not self-evident, let others, or let us at another time, resolve them into something more evident. But since they are true, let us see to what they lead;—let us apply them to cases,—combine, extend, exalt them. This may be *our* labour, as a part of *our* system: but this, too, must be the labour of all who employ their minds upon moral questions. Their occupation therefore, and ours, is the same. We, as system-makers, do only what they do as moral thinkers. The only difference between us, if there be such a difference, is, that we make it a necessary condition of our labours that they shall be logical, methodical, consistent; whereas those who decri systems, often talk as if they thought these qualities were rather faults than merits.

But let us look a little further into the question, whether such principles as have been mentioned are self-evident, and in what way they are evident. They are not, it may be granted, evident to wild men, to savage men, to men whose humanity is disturbed by passion, or undeveloped by human intercourse and thought: but I say that they nevertheless may be evident to man as man. That is, what is not evident to the infant, to solitary or thoughtless or passionate man, may be evident to man grown to manhood among men thinking calmly of such things. It may be, that though a man can deny, for instance, that *man is to be loved as man*, if the question be put to him when he is thinking only of his foes, yet that, if he is made to understand that the opinion which he is to deliver is to be a moral truth, applicable alike to all men, he will see that it cannot be a moral truth, that Trojan and Rutulian ought to hate each other. It may be, that when such convictions have taken full possession of his mind, he cannot believe but that it is a law of humanity, that all men should love all men; and that anger and hatred, however much they may prevail, are violations of such a universal law. And this impossibility of believing that such principles are not true, which is seen when the mind is fully applied to them, is the evidence on which such principles rest. Whether we, on this account, call them *self-evident* or not,—whether we term them *Axioms*,—is a matter of small consequence. But it is of great consequence that they are, on consideration, seen to be *true*; and that such principles are, on a calm and thoughtful consideration, seen by all men to be true, is the foundation-fact of morality, and must be so, whether or not Morality is wrought into a System in which this fact appears in its proper place.

Perhaps it may be said that the principles we have mentioned,—that one for instance, that man is to be loved as

man,—cannot properly be called an Axiom, or self-evident principle, since we may give reasons for it ; as, for instance, this reason,—that to suppose it false, and to suppose that man may hate man, would be to introduce, as a principle of morality, a doctrine which sets one part of humanity against another, and which therefore cannot be the proper voice of humanity. Nor do I deny the force of the arguments thus urged: only I observe, that, in this way, if I lose one Axiom, I gain another. If the objector takes from me as a First Principle, the maxim, that man is to be loved as man, he gives me as a Prior Principle, the maxim, that *that* cannot be a Moral Principle which sets one part of humanity against another. And this Principle will answer my purpose quite as well as the other, in the construction of a System ; while it would, I suppose, be equally unlikely to receive the assent of Peter the Wild Boy, or of the Promiscuous Jury of Savages.

Indeed I can see no reason why Moral Truths should not be spoken of as evident, although we see them evidently only when we have discerned some other truth, or gone through some other train of thought. Truths may be self-evident when we have made a certain progress in thinking, which are not self-evident when we begin to think. And this may be, not because the truths thus later discerned are dependent on the prerequisite truths by any logical tie, or can be inferred from them by argument ; but because, by the train of thought by which we come to see those earlier gleams of truth, the mind is unfolded and instructed, so as to perceive the later and fuller light. This may be so, because in the process of thought thus previously gone through we have learnt to classify and distinguish the actions of men around us, or our own feelings and impulses within us. It may be that to groups and classes and relations of emotions and sentiments we have given names ; and

that through these names, language has exercised its power of aiding thought, and has enabled us to see what, without such aid, we could not see. In these ways, and in others, moral truths may become evident to us, when we have made some little advance in the development of our moral nature, and in the power of apprehending such truth; although, so long as we were half embruted by the absence of any calm and continued thought on such subjects, and by the scantiness of our acquaintance with those relations among men which are the materials for such thought, we were insensible to the evidence which now seems so glaring. It requires a *culture* of the human mind to make that evident, which, nevertheless, is evident by the *nature* of the human mind.

And, in truth, we cannot help asking, why we should go to savages for the genuine voice of human nature. Why should it be supposed that men are more properly men, because in them some of the most important attributes of humanity remain latent and undeveloped? If cultured men see, as evident in morals, what savages do not see as evident, are not cultured men still men? And all that they know and think, in addition to what savages know and think, did they not come to know it by the use of their human faculties? The early Romans called every stranger an enemy; every *peregrinus* was *hostis*. The later Romans filled the theatre with thunders of applause, when the poet made the actor say,

*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

Which of these two was the genuine voice of humanity? Was not the latter evidently the assent to the irresistible evidence of a moral truth? Was that earlier practical denial of this moral truth really the utterance of a moral conviction? Was it not an utterance which came from man, not as the utterance of conviction, but of uncontrolled fear and anger? not an articulate utterance in the name

of humanity, but an inarticulate cry, borrowing part of its import from the ferine nature of the nation. It was a trace of the wolf's milk. And even at that earlier period, if any Roman senator had been asked, whether, if he had to make laws for the whole earth, to legislate in the name of the human race, and to legislate for thoughts as well as actions,—whether under such conditions he would command that the Italian should eternally hate the Greek, and the Greek the Asiatic; what do we suppose he would say? We may suppose he would say much what Cicero said afterwards; that man is bound to man by a universal tie of benevolence. And if he did not say this, would it not be manifestly because his human nature was less perfectly unfolded than that of Cicero?—not because he was a better representative of the genuine feeling of mankind, but because he was a worse.

If any one tells us that the test of the natural evidence of moral principles is their being assented to by the most barbarous of men as soon as propounded to them, we must ask him from what region, then, come those convictions and sentiments by which civilized differ from barbarous men. Are not *these* too a part of human nature? He says, perhaps, that while the mutual enmity of nations is a natural feeling, their mutual good-will is an artificial sentiment. But if artificial, how is it artificial? Is it not a part of that *art* by which men are men, and not brutes? Is it not artificial as language is artificial; as society is artificial; as tranquillity and security in the relations of domestic society are artificial? In this sense, indeed, our moral first principles are artificial; but then this cannot well be helped, because, in this sense, morality itself is artificial. It is surely enough for us if our principles are self-evident to those to whom alone any general principles are self-evident, and to whom alone any general principles are objects of contemplation. It is

no disproof of our principle that they are rejected by those who *do not* understand them : it is enough for us, if they are accepted by all who *do* understand them ;—if no one who was capable of deliberately considering whether they were true, ever pronounced them false.

The arguments which I have been using appear to me very simple and decisive, in the form in which I have stated them. I could have put them in a form in which they are more brief and pointed, and as appears to me, still more decisive ; but I have purposely abstained from doing so, because I have found that, presented in that form, they appeared to give offense, and to excite irritation. What I mean is this : I might have said—in reply to the argument that there can be no *moral* axioms, because those which we bring forward as such are not assented to by savages or uncultured men,—that the same argument would prove that there are no *geometrical* axioms, because *those* also are not assented to by savages and uncultured men. If we take a promiscuous jury of men, with no intellectual culture, and ask them whether—when a straight line falling upon two straight lines makes the internal angles on the same side of the lines less than two right angles, the two lines, if produced far enough, will meet,—what can we suppose they will say ? Will they allow this twelfth Axiom of Euclid to be self-evident ? But, the objector will say, a set of men entirely uncultured will not understand the terms of this proposition. They require some thought, some time, to consider these lines and angles, to put together all the conditions, to consider whether a proposition so general is true or false. With these preliminary steps, they *will* assent to the axiom. Suppose we grant that they will. Still, this preliminary process is intellectual culture. They are, after this preparation, no longer barbarians on this

subject ; they assent to the axiom, because the human intellect sees it to be true ; but they assent to it also, because they have *now* learnt to see what the human intellect sees. And is not the case exactly the same with those which we propound as fundamental moral principles ? Man is capable of seeing them as evident, for otherwise how do *we* see them as evident ? But a promiscuous jury,—a rude, uncultured, barbarous mass of human beings, do not know *what* man is capable of seeing as evident. The mind must be prepared, in order to see *moral* as well as *geometrical* axioms. In order to do so, it is requisite at least that men should understand the terms of the proposition, in all their generality ; and to do this, may often be no inconsiderable expansion from the previous condition of a barbarian's mind.

But again : if any one objects to our suggestion that moral principles may be seen by us as axioms at a subsequent stage of moral speculations, which were not so seen at first ; we may request him to observe that in geometry, the most rigorous of sciences, this is so. For instance, with regard to that twelfth Axiom of Euclid, concerning parallel lines, what is the case ? Is it evident to the learner at the beginning of the *Elements*, that if the angles be less than two right angles the lines will meet ? No ; I think not. But when, in the twenty-eighth proposition, it has been proved that *if* the angles be *equal* to two right angles, the lines *will not* meet, then the evidence of the converse of this proposition breaks fully upon us, and we do not hesitate to grant, as an axiom, the truth of this converse, that if the angles be *less* than two right angles the lines *will* meet. Nor is this a solitary instance. The axioms stated by other geometers, as the bases of their special lines of reasoning ; for instance, those stated by Archimedes, as the foundation of some of his investigations, are evident,

indeed, to a mind which has received a certain degree of geometrical culture; but would, I think, be looked upon as doubtful or obscure, if presented to a student at the very outset of his geometrical studies. So completely does geometry, the subject in which truths are traced to axioms in the most distinct and demonstrative manner, justify us in the persuasion that our fundamental principles in morals may rightly be regarded as axioms, although they are then only evident, when the mind has been calmly and patiently employed upon the subject, and has made some progress in the lines of thought which such an employment opens to it.

Such lessons, I say, it seems to me, we may learn from our System of Geometry, with regard to a System of Morality, such as we desire to have. For our System of Geometry is precisely such a system as we have described: a Body of Truths, definitely expressed and rationally connected. And therefore it might, I think, be deemed very reasonable that, so far as Geometry shows the possibility of such a body of knowledge, that science should be regarded as not un instructive, even for the Moral Philosopher: and that any arguments, the purpose of which is to show that we *cannot have* such a system of *Morality* as I have described, should be considered as fallacious, if they are such as would show, with equal cogency, that we *cannot have* such a system of *Geometry*. And it has often appeared to me that the simplest and shortest way of disposing of such arguments as I have referred to;—arguments that there can be no demonstrative System of Morals, because there are no moral axioms evident to all mankind, and the like;—is to try whether they do not equally apply in every other province of knowledge, and in geometry in particular; and whether they do not prove that in that province also, there can be no demonstrative body of knowledge.

This seems to me to be a perfectly reasonable and philosophical mode of proceeding; but I have abstained from dwelling upon it at present, because, as I have said, I have found that any attempt to suggest any analogy whatever between Morality and Geometry produces offense, and is received with impatience. When the analogy is merely this, that both are systems of truth, I do not see *why* this offense should be taken at the suggestion; but as anything which I have to assert respecting Systems of Morality does not at all depend on this suggested analogy, I willingly abstain from any such mode of answering the *à priori* arguments against the possibility of a moral system. I believe indeed, that the repugnance to admit the applicability of such illustrations, which thus prevails, arises from a mistaken view of the nature of knowledge; and from not having considered that, to a certain extent, all methodical exposition of truth must have a common character and scheme. I believe that this repugnance arises from an imperfect view of the nature of the evidence in geometrical demonstration, as well as from an imperfect conviction of the certainty of moral truth. But whatever be the origin of this repugnance, I am not going to struggle with it. I leave those uncontradicted, who cry out that there is no analogy at all between geometry and morality, and that no arguments, or philosophical maxims, borrowed from the one branch of knowledge, can be applied to the other. I am quite willing to allow that morality differs altogether, in most important respects, from all the sciences in which space and time and material things are the objects of our contemplation. I think it as essential as any one can think it, to keep clearly in view those differences between the moral sciences, (if they are to be called sciences,) on the one side, and the mathematical and material sciences on the other side. I think it essential that moral conceptions shall be regarded in a moral light, defined by

moral lines, treated of by moral arguments; not defined and reasoned about in a mathematical manner. I think, indeed, as I have said, that there are conditions of knowledge and of truth so wide, that they comprehend all truths, moral and mathematical; but I am quite willing to put out of sight those conditions, (which are not a part of morality, but of the philosophy of science,) and to dwell upon the peculiarities which separate morality from mathematics, rather than upon the attributes which they have in common. And it may perhaps serve further to illustrate the character of that Systematic Morality, which we mean to try to construct, if I point out, at this stage of our progress, the leading distinction between the two classes of sciences, (using the term *science* for the sake of brevity,)—the moral, and the material sciences: morality, on the one hand; geometry, or mechanics, or natural history, on the other.

The leading distinction between these classes of sciences requires no ingenuity to discover. It is obvious to all. It is, that while geometry and the other sciences are concerned only with what we *see*, morality is concerned with what we *will* and *do*. In the former man is merely *contemplative*; in the latter he is *active*, as well as contemplative, and contemplates his own acts. In the material sciences, we are concerned only with laws of nature; in the moral sciences, we are concerned mainly with laws of action. And the language of these two classes of laws is different. Laws of the former kind only proclaim what *is*. Laws of the latter kind declare what *ought to be*. A law of material nature it is, that all portions of matter *tend* to each other. A law of human nature it is, a moral law, that all men *ought to love* one another. If we use the terms of grammar, we may say that the assertions, in the material and mathematical sciences, are *indicative*, or as the Greeks termed it, *categorical*; those of the moral sciences *imperative*. Ma-

thematics is theoretical ; Morality is practical. And though, in a certain sense, the other sciences may be called *practical* also, so when we speak of *practical Geometry*, or *practical Mechanics*, yet this is in a lower sense. For these practical sciences merely teach us what we *may* do, in order to attain certain assumed ends ; but morality teaches what we must do, and prescribes the end of action. The practical rules, in the one case are relative : in the other, they are absolute. In Geometry, Mechanics, and the like, the practical application is an arbitrary and unessential appendage to the theoretical doctrines. In morality, the theoretical doctrines are essential only as steps which guide us to the practical rules. The natural utterance of Morality is command. Her declarations are Rules.

This is so much the case, that propositions in Morality which are only indicative in their form, are imperative in their import : as when we say, “ It is the Duty of all men to do ” this or that. On this account, the *categorical imperative* of morality has been spoken of by moralists, namely, by Kant, and others. And in like manner, other terms imply rules of action, while they seem only to assert existences and relations ; as when we say, that the happiness, the supreme good, the highest interest of a man, or of a State, consists in this or that condition or course of action : or when we assert that prudence is the natural guide of appetite ; or that reason is the human, ungoverned anger, the ferine part of man.

In all these cases, the proposition asserted carries with it an irresistible implication that one course of action pointed at in the assertions ought to be followed, and another course avoided. Such propositions do not leave the will entirely unaffected, as the propositions of geometry do. They affect the equilibrium of the springs of human action, exerting a pressure in one direction or in another.

And if we look for the reason how this comes to be so, we shall perceive this, among other things, to be a condition of it;—that there are employed in such propositions, terms which find their meaning in our consciousness in a peculiar manner. Such terms as Duty, Happiness, Good, Interest; such names as Reason and Anger, Prudence and Appetite, are words which we understand by a special reference to what we feel within ourselves. They are not terms which describe, in a manner more or less general and abstract, things which offer themselves to the senses, and the relations and attributes of such things; they describe things which exist within us, and their relations. The conceptions which such words call up, are Realities, no less than stocks and stones are; but they are Realities, not in the outer world of stocks and stones, but in the inner world of thoughts and emotions.

Yet the matter of our speculations is not therefore scanty, because it thus belongs to another world than the world of matter. It is, on the contrary, wide enough. It is *Quicquid agunt homines*:—all the impulses of human action, *Votum, timor, ira, voluptas, gaudia, cupido*, are among the miscellaneous contents of our books. But, indeed, this is not the whole; this is but a small part of the subject of morality; this is but the beginning of our studies; the main point is still to come after all this: we have to consider not only *Quid agant homines*; but *quid hominibus agendum sit*;—not only to look at the common course of action in our neighbours, as Horace's father accustomed him to do: but also to supply those truths for which he referred his son to more profound teachers—

Sapiens, vitatu quidque petitu  
Sit melius, causas reddet tibi.

(*Sat. Lib. I. 4. v. 112*).

The Moralist has, for his region of thought, every thing about which other men think most eagerly ;—all that occupies the mind of the poet, the historian, the tragedian, the comedian, the advocate, the statesman, the poor, the rich, the recluse, the man of the world ; and he has, besides all their views, his own special view : for he has to consider, not only, with them, the means which they have to use to gain their purposes ; but he has also to weigh their purposes against each other ;—to compare the ends of life according to each view, and to decide how far each lies on the road to the far end, the true aim of human life.

And thus, the moralist has before him a most ample field for speculation ; and one, as I have said, quite distinct from the field of speculation of the mathematician, and the physicist, and the naturalist. He has a world within for his empire, which, all within him as it is, is not smaller than the world without, to the eye of reason. The *microcosm*, the little world of man, is really not less than the *macrocosm*, the great world of nature. The moralist said what every moral thinker will feel to be true, when he declared that, great as was the impression of sublimity when he turned his eyes to the starry concave without him, he saw a spectacle no less solemn and awful, when he looked at the sphere of consciousness within. And beyond all doubt, these two worlds affect us in a different manner, and are to be studied according to different methods. The true method, in each course, must lead, as I conceive, to a system of Truths ; but the very nature of the Truth appears to differ in the one system and in the other. The Moral Sciences may be called *Sciences*, if by that term we mean no more than that there are Truths in Morality : but if by adopting the word *Science* in such an application, we were to be supposed to contract any obligation, or incur any danger, of attempting to apply

to Morality the analogies of Geometry or Mechanics, it would be much better to avoid the word *Science* altogether. Morality has its Philosophy, as Geometry and Mechanics, and Natural History, have their Philosophy; but the Philosophy of Morality will not be moral, except it is constructed independently of other philosophies.

In my lectures, I may perhaps, occasionally, from the habits of my own mind, be led to illustrate the relations of moral truth by reference to other kinds of Truth; and it is possible that there may be some of you whose mental habits may so far have the same tendency that, to them, such illustrations may not be unmeaning or unwelcome. But if there be any of my hearers who see no value or meaning in such illustrations, let them by all means disregard all that comes from me of that kind; and I trust it will still be found, when this rejection has been performed, that nothing is thereby left wanting to the connection and proof of the doctrines which I bring before you. I have to discuss moral questions:—I shall endeavour to do so on moral grounds, and by trains of moral reasoning. All illustration and speculation which I offer to you, and which goes beyond this, may be considered, not so much as a part of morality, or of moral philosophy, as of philosophy in general:—not as making morality depend upon extraneous subjects, but as making philosophy depend upon morality. All such matter, I am to be supposed to deliver, not as a Moralist, but as a Metaphysician.

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## LECTURE III.

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### OF FACTS AND IDEAS IN MORALITY.

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I HAVE spoken in the two preceding lectures of the general character which must belong to a System of Morality such as we here contemplate, and have endeavoured to remove some preliminary objections, sometimes made to the attempt at constructing a moral system. I have stated that the kind of System about which I wish to engage your attention, may be described as *a Body of Moral Truths, definitely expressed, and arranged according to their rational connection*. And as, under this description, a System of Morality might seem to some to assume in some degree the character of a System of Geometry, and as offense has been taken at the supposition of such a geometrical character in a Moral System, I pointed out the broad differences and strong contrasts which exist between Morality on one side, and any of the mathematical and material Sciences on the other. I hope the antithesis was made so distinct and emphatic as to remove any fear that we may be carried away from the genuine standing point of morality, by attempted analogies with those other sciences, or by aiming at mathematical proofs in moral subjects.

But having removed this danger, we must not let our fear and suspicions of such imaginary analogies and incongruous proofs, carry us away, on the other hand, from the very conception of our System,—that in it Moral Truths are to be expressed in definite terms, and connected by conclusive reasonings. We are not to say, as people sometimes *do* say,

that the meanings of words in discussing moral subjects must necessarily be vague, and the reasonings on such subjects necessarily loose. No doubt, when men's thoughts are vague, and the connection of propositions in their minds dim and wavering, their language will also be vague, and their reasonings inconclusive. But this is not a case peculiar to moral questions; and is a state of things no more to be acquiesced in on moral subjects than on any others. We are, in morals as in other subjects, to try to make our thoughts definite and our words exact; and to make each definite and exact by means of the others. We are, in morals as in other subjects, to try to make our reasonings convincing; and for this purpose, to make them logical. And this is no new doctrine, invented expressly for our purposes. Men have always proclaimed and taught it; and those who took any care about their words and reasonings have professed to act upon it. Men have tried to find the right words, and by them to express the right reasonings, when they have tried to use their reason at all. They have not despaired of exactness of expression, or demonstrative force of proof, in morals, any more than in other subjects. Look, for instance, at jurisprudence, which is a branch of morality. Its admirers boast of its using words with as much precision as mathematicians: they say that, next to the models of demonstration afforded by the Greek Geometers, come those supplied by the Latin Jurists; they reproach those pretenders in the study who do not know how to define their terms, or to use terms according to their definition. And moralists, as well as lawyers, have sought to attain to this precision and this conclusiveness in their writings. Often, indeed, the moralists have also been, by profession or study, jurists also, and have endeavoured to extend into morality the best characteristics of their jural studies: but even in questions of morality remote from law,

how correctly and convincingly have the best moral authors written! what clearness and precision in their language! what force in their arguments! Distinctions so fine, yet so solid, that once caught they are never lost! trains of reasoning so irresistible that they never fail to convince, when the lull of passion and interest allows them to be heard! Who, after reading such moral writings as these, can claim for morality the special privilege of being vague in expression and loose in reasoning? Who does not see that such characters are aberrations from the true characters of moral reasoning? In moral discussion, as in all other rational use of language, vagueness and looseness are diseases, not functions of the constitution. To be precise and logical, is the healthy condition of the mind in this as in other subjects; and however opposed to geometry morality be in many ways, the one does not differ from the other in this respect.

There is another peculiarity which is sometimes claimed for the moral sciences, as distinguishing them from other parts of human knowledge, and which requires a little consideration. Morality, it is said, depends upon our *Consciousness*: its fundamental elements are *Facts* of which we are conscious. In this respect morality differs from the material sciences, which are concerned about facts which we know, not by consciousness, but by observation;—differs also from the mathematical sciences, which are concerned, not about truths of fact, but truths resting upon certain hypotheses. Now I have no wish to disturb these antitheses: on the contrary, I hold it to be very important that they should be borne in mind. I think it very important that we should recollect that we have, concerning the springs and rules of human action, a knowledge derived from our own consciousness, of a kind quite different from any knowledge which observation could have given us. I think it important, also, that we should frame our morality so that it shall

correspond to the actual nature of man and the actual condition of society, and not to any hypothetical condition of human nature and human society. I do not acknowledge, as genuine or true, any morality which is not faithful to our consciousness, and to the facts of which we are conscious, as well as those which we observe. Our consciousness alone gives meaning to the moral phenomena which we observe. The internal facts are the only key to the external facts. But allowing this, it is still important to remark, that we may lay too much stress on these *words*, *Consciousness* and *Facts*: and that we cannot always, by the mere use of these words, mark the difference between one subject of human thought and another;—between morality, for instance, and mechanics or geometry. For in mechanics too, those who treat of the elements of the science, have been in the habit of referring to our consciousness. They have usually taught that we derive the conception of *Force* from the muscular effort which we are *conscious* of making. And even in geometry, on what evidence do the axioms depend? Is it not on the impossibility which we are *conscious* of, when we try to conceive the opposite of them? Two straight lines cannot inclose a space. How do we know this? We are conscious, that if we conceive two lines inclosing a space, we must conceive one of them, at least, as curved. This is a fact of consciousness, if there be *any* facts of consciousness. It is true, that the consciousness which shows us this, is very different from the consciousness of anger, or hope, or remorse, or self-approval. But it is not different in *being* consciousness; and we must not expect to get rid of all difficulties, arising from any question as to the different nature of our subject and other subjects, by saying that morality depends upon consciousness and other sciences do not. Morality depends upon our consciousness, it is true; and it depends upon a particular kind of consciousness;—our consciousness

of our appetites, desires, affections, and springs of action in general; our consciousness of intention, volition and action; our consciousness of rules of action, and the sentiments with which we regard actions and tendencies of action, according to their conformity to or violation of rule. These parts of our consciousness are the peculiar field of morality; and when we say that morality is characterized by its reference to our consciousness, we must, in order to avoid mistake, recollect that we mean this particular kind of consciousness.

Again, with regard to the term *Fact*, on which much stress is sometimes laid,—a kind of reality and truth being thus claimed for Facts, and that which depends on Facts, different from that which is allowed to other doctrines, supposed to have only a hypothetical or ideal character,—I must say a few words. I am very far from denying,—on the contrary I would most emphatically assert,—that there is knowledge which is real and true, and other doctrines which, however plausible in their enunciation, are hypothetical, unreal, and false. But I must hesitate to allow that this distinction can always be expressed and pointed out by saying that one set of assertions are facts, or drawn from facts, and another set of assertions are not so. I find it the more necessary to make this reservation, because the use of the term *Fact*, as if, for such a purpose, it were all powerful, is very common, both in speaking and writing. It sometimes appears to be thought that the use of the term with a sufficient portion of emphasis, added by tone or repetition, Italics or Capitals, is quite decisive in any question. We are told that we have *Facts* on one side, and mere opinions on the other, and therefore all reasoning is superfluous.

Now I am not going to attempt to throw any dis-

paragement upon Facts, or even upon the word by which they are described; but still I think it is not safe, in our progress towards a system of truth on any subject, to have this loose and hollow place among our foundations;—to have, among our elementary words, one which is to produce a special and decisive effect on our discussions by its repetition, tone, and typography. We must try to give Facts a more definite place and meaning than is implied in the style of argumentation of which I have spoken.

I would remark, in the first place, that all *Truths* are Facts. It is not merely the particular events which I observe around me, or am conscious of within me, which are to be called Facts—that the sun rises, for instance, or that I love my brother;—but also general Truths, whether self-evident or established by reasoning. It is a Fact that two straight lines cannot inclose a space;—it is a Fact that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the two sides;—it is a Fact that, in Mechanics, what we gain in power we lose in time;—it is a Fact that honesty is the best policy. All these, and innumerable other assertions, are Facts, because they are true. True Doctrines are Facts; and the most general doctrines, if true, are Facts, as much as the particular facts which are collected more directly and immediately from the exercise of the senses or the consciousness. If, with regard to the former kind of Facts, an opponent might escape from the effect of our reasonings, by telling us that what we say is a matter of Opinion, not a matter of Fact; he might just as reasonably do the same with regard to the latter kind. This distinction of matters of Seeming and matters of Fact might be urged in the case of the most obvious facts of the senses or of consciousness:—a person might say that the real Fact is, not that the sun rises, but that the earth revolves:—not that I love my brother, but that I expect

to derive some pleasure from him. General truths are general facts; and they are derived from particular facts, by facts of intermediate generality; thus the general doctrine, that honesty is the best policy, I may have derived from particular cases in which I have found honesty to be good policy: or from particular facts which shew what the working of honesty is, and what are the best ends at which policy, that is, prudence, can aim. And thus, all propositions, so far as they are true, are facts; and to say that they are facts, means that they are true.

But though all truths are facts, all truths are not learnt merely by the exercise of the senses, which is sometimes supposed to be implied in the meaning of *Fact*. For general truths, at least, imply thought, as well as the use of the senses. Such truths as I have mentioned, in geometry, in mechanics, and even in morals, however much they may require impressions on the senses, as their foundation, still imply some further exercise of the mind, for their apprehension. These go to the making of them, Thoughts, as well as Things; Ideas as well as mere Sensations. You will perceive, by the introduction of these antitheses, that I am becoming engaged in a disquisition which has somewhat of a metaphysical character. Such a line of discussion appears to me to be unavoidable, in dealing with the point now under consideration. I shall follow it as short a way as is at all consistent with any hope of making myself intelligible.

All truths, I say, involve both Thoughts and Things; both Ideas and Sensations. But I say further, that, to this extent, not only are all true opinions the knowledge of facts, but all knowledge of facts is merely true opinion. All facts involve thoughts, as well as things; ideas, as well as sensation. There are no facts, in the sense sometimes assumed, and above referred to;—facts of sense

merely, in which the mind is merely passive, and takes the impressions of the external world as they offer themselves.

My proof of this doctrine will not be the most general which can be given; (I have discussed the matter in a more comprehensive way elsewhere\*;) but it will, I think, suffice amply with regard to Facts, as they are referred to in our present subject, Morality. We find persons, for instance, who, discoursing upon such subjects, tell us that man is universally impelled to act by the desire of pleasure, or by interest; or again, that he instinctively approves certain classes of actions, and disapproves of others. Now such assertions, as to their truth, may be a very proper subject of discussion. But with regard to all such assertions, when they are put forward as mere Facts, which admit of no further analysis *because* they are mere Facts, we may observe, that this is plainly not a right account of them; for the *Terms* in which they are expressed, the *Words* of the assertions, imply many large and complex mental operations, which must be attended to, as well as the impressions which are connected and moulded by these mental operations. The meaning of *pleasure* and *interest*, *approbation* and *disapprobation*, and the separation of actions into classes, cannot be apprehended by the mind, without a long course of active thinking; and it is this thinking, which makes the Facts to be what they are, whatsoever that be. A moralist who sets out from these Facts, or from such Facts as these, and who thinks it a sufficient account to give of them, that they are Facts, must not be surprised if we pay no regard to reasonings which begin with a rejection of the foundations of reasoning. It is as if, in mechanics, any one were to assume the Principle of virtual velocities,

\* *On the Fundamental Antithesis of Philosophy. Transactions of the Camb. Phil. Soc. Vol. VIII. Part ii.*

or the Principle of least action, or some other large and comprehensive proposition, as a mere Fact. However true the proposition might be, such a mode of proceeding would render it impossible for this speculator to construct a system of mechanics which should carry conviction to the minds of men in general.

And thus, as I have said, we shall think the assertions made by opponents, that this or that principle is a *mere Fact*, however emphatically the phrase be pointed;—are sufficiently answered, by saying that there *are no* mere Facts;—that all Facts so asserted are expressed in Words; and that Words imply Ideas as well as mere Sensations; and borrow their import from the Ideas which they involve, not from these Sensations. The Words in which the Facts are asserted are not mere Facts; or at least they are Facts involving the thoughts of many men and many generations; these Words, their history, extent, meaning, the principles and sparks of truth which they involve, may all be analyzed; and in this analysis, we are led to those Ideas with which our Reason can deal, and by means of which alone she arrives at Truths. All honour therefore be to Facts, because they are Truths: but if any one opposes Facts to Ideas, as if the one could subsist without the other; we forthwith cease to defer to his Facts, because they are only what remains of Truths when all the elements of Truth are extracted from them; or rather, what would remain, if such a separation were possible; which it is not; for we can never present the *Factual* part of a Fact, separate from the Ideal part; since, as I have said, we can never separate the assertion of the Fact from the use of Words, in which Ideas are involved.

I have dwelt so long upon this metaphysical discussion respecting Facts and Ideas, in order to have done with it for the remainder of my lectures. I wished, once for

all, to dispose of the mode of argumentation which claims a sort of sacredness for the word *Fact*, as if when it had been uttered, it were captious and irreverent in any one to protract the discussion. And yet the irreverence is generally on the other side;—or at least the immorality. When men refer to anything as a *Great Fact*, they generally mean to say “you must be governed by it, whether you think it right or wrong.” A Great Fact is so called in order to daunt us from looking at its immorality, or to lead us to gaze at its material greatness. And yet, even in this term, we have the proof of the doctrine which I am asserting: For how can any Fact be Great, except by the Idea which it involves, and which makes it Great? This fondness for the word *Fact*, accompanied, as it often is, with a dislike of the word *Idea*, implies, as far as it is consistent with itself, a renunciation of the powers which we possess for the perception of Truth; and by which alone, in morality or in any other subject, we can become possessed of real knowledge.

But though all this dislike of systems and ideas and definitions and demonstrations, is really irrational; and is intelligible only as part of a train of thought, which, consistently pursued, would make vague and wavering language, and loose and incoherent reasoning, to be merits; it may be worth our while to consider a little further, what is the meaning and origin of this frame of mind;—what is the real object of dislike which leads men to reject truth itself, when it comes to them under these forms. It may be, that in exclaiming against systems, they have in their mind some particular kind or supposed consequence of systems. It may be, that in protesting against Ideas, and emphatically throwing themselves upon Facts, they are really repelled by some Idea of falsehood and emptiness,

which they assume as the representative of all Ideas, even of the Ideas of Rightness and Goodness. If this be so, it is no wonder that they reject our Ideas for Facts; since, in all their Facts, they have already enshrined an Idea of Truth and Reality, which they suppose our Ideas do not and cannot possess. No wonder, if this be so, that they talk of Systems and Doctrines as empty Formulæ, Shadows, Lies, or by whatever opprobrious name they can best express their dislike of the Idea which is the antithesis of their own cardinal and central Idea. No wonder, if this be so, that their repugnance to moral systems takes so many varying shapes; and, however proved to be irrational and self-destructive in one form, speedily reappears in another. Let us see, therefore, if we cannot seize this anti-systematic Idea of the opponents. Let us try to discern and bring to view some of its attributes at least; perhaps its very central essence. Let us ask why men's minds, that is, *some* men's minds, are revolted and disturbed at the very conception of a demonstrated system of Moral Truths.

I think some of the leading features of the Spectre System, from which the antisystematists turn with horror, are these;—they suppose that as a System consists of propositions expressed in words, we, who adopt it, shall lay too much stress upon these verbal assertions, and shall thus allow our internal moral sentiments to be superseded by phrases: and again, they suppose that the System, once formed, is looked upon as something complete and final, not expanding and unfolding itself according to the development of men's characters, and the progress of society. These, I think, are two main points on which the dislike of system fastens;—verbal hollowness, and lifeless fixity.

And that these are characters from which we ought to preserve our moral views, we can have no doubt. Systems which have such attributes, are certainly worthless

and dangerous things. The Ideas of verbal hollowness and lifeless fixity are certainly Ideas which ought to repel us. But such Ideas are not among those which are to be embodied in *our* scheme of morality. The system at which we aim is not a system to which such attributes belong. Nor are they at all implied in the view which I have given of our contemplated system. Let us see how the objection stands. In the first place, it is said that because our system is made up of propositions expressed in words, our belief in it will be a belief in words merely. It will be a hollow formula. But how is this? Because truths are expressed in words, are they mere formulæ? How otherwise can they be expressed? And because we have assented to truths expressed in a form of words,—if you choose, in a settled and permanent form of words,—why must the words become mere words, hollow of real meaning? Is this so in other subjects?—for really, in reference to such an objection, you must allow me to refer to other subjects, as the simplest and most direct way of testing the value of the objection;—is it, I say true, in other subjects, that truths, expressed in a settled and permanent form of words, become mere verbal formulæ, without any corresponding reality in the mind of him who receives and repeats them? We know very well that this may be so;—that men may receive and repeat truths as mere forms of words, without appropriating and realizing them. This may be so in other subjects; in physiology; in chemistry; in mechanics; in geometry. In such sciences, and in any others, men may deliver propositions about the respective subjects of the sciences, which propositions are verbally true, but yet are no truths *for them*. Men may talk of “reflex nervous action,” of “analysis and synthesis,” of “action and reaction,” of the “method of exhaustions;” and yet they who thus talk may have no real meaning in their mind, connected

with these terms, and may not really see the truths which may be expressed by means of such terms. In such cases, the words of the system are for them mere words; they *are* empty formulæ. But then, for whom are they this? Who are the persons who thus make a system into a mere set of verbal propositions? The ignorant and thoughtless;—the physiological babbler; the chemical dabbler; the mechanist without mechanical knowledge; the geometrical pretender. And do the baseless pretensions and empty babble of these men make the sciences less true, or the systems less solid? To take the most familiar of these sciences,—because it *is* the most familiar, and for *no other reason*,—if a man may speak of angles and tangents, of axioms and postulates, without really understanding them, does that make these words unmeaning? Or rather, does not the geometer differ from the pretender, precisely in this respect; that the former has a conception fastened to each word, and that he cannot use the word without having a corresponding reality in his mind;—a reality *so* real, that it enables him to reason solidly about the thing which the word denotes, and thus to go on securely from truth to truth. This is the case in geometry; it is the case in all other subjects which consist of permanent truths; and when we speak of a system of morality, we mean a system in which, also, this shall be the case. We mean a system in which the words, which describe moral elements and moral relations, because they are well chosen and steadily used, always *do* call up the corresponding thought, and enable the moral reasoner to reason aright concerning the realities within him. This is the character which must belong to any system which we shall acknowledge as a moral system. Its words and propositions,—its *formulæ*, if you choose so to call them,—must be the permanent forms of moral thought; and the construction of the system must consist

in selecting such forms as can permanently circumscribe and determine the relations of moral thought. And we go onwards to the task of constructing such a system, with this warning;—that when the words become, to the student, mere words, he has lost the thread of real moral study, and cannot further go on *with us*. However familiar any of our propositions and reasonings may become in words, they must have real convictions and connections of reason correspondent to them: and of these convictions, we must be able to verify the reality, by resolving them, when necessary, into the more simple convictions upon which they are established; and these, again, into others still more simple; and so on, till we come to the elementary notions and convictions, on which our system rests, and which every man possesses in his own bosom.

Again;—with regard to the objection, that a system must be a dead framework, incapable of a growth which may make it correspond to living men and an advancing world;—this, again, is not true of such a moral system as we contemplate. We wish to have a body of moral truths; but such truths as will allow other truths to be educed from them;—as will be the natural and necessary steps to other truths. And the system must contain a provision for this developement of new truths, out of those already familiar, and for the application of such truths to the new relations of society, and the enlarged capacity of man, if his capacities of morality should be enlarged. In this capability of educing new truths out of a system of established truth, there is surely nothing which is not perfectly in harmony with the most familiar characters of a system of truths. I will not again refer to the examples of acknowledged sciences, but it is evident that I might do so, without any need of selection; for this same character belongs to them all, and is in the course of perpetual operation, in the application

of such sciences to the uses of men, or in their expansion under the influence of man's curiosity.

But there is one other character of System which, perhaps, lurks among men's thoughts when they condemn systems in general; and which, if it be there, well deserves our notice. Perhaps they think man's moral nature is so modified by the development of character, and the progress of society, that no system in which old doctrines continue to be insisted upon as true, can suit him. Perhaps they think, not only that many things ought to become new, but that old things ought to pass away; and consequently, that our system, which is to be one in which old truths do *not* pass away, but if they are once true, continue so, whatever additions may be made to them, cannot be such a scheme as they are willing to accept. And if this be the view of any opponent, we must indeed continue to differ from him; for undoubtedly, it is a part of our system,—an essential feature,—that the elementary truths continue ever true, and ever to be the basis of all the rest. Our foundations are permanent. They may become unnoticed, as the superstructure which is erected upon them rises higher and higher; but they are still there, and still the same. No revolution in society or in man can overturn them, for they are too deep to be reached by revolution. They have been laid by generation after generation. They consist in thoughts which have been gradually evolved into definiteness, and cemented together in their places; and these thoughts can never lose their meaning, nor indeed materially change their expression. The fundamental antitheses of *right* and *wrong*, of what we *ought* and *ought not* to do; the great abstractions of Duty and Virtue; the august Ideas of Justice and Truth;—these can never be out of date. We may render more and more distinct,

these Ideas, and the particular conceptions and relations which they include; but the Rule of human action must always be expressed by these, and such words as these; and its primary conditions, indicated by such terms, can never be materially altered. These are some of the Ideas which lie at the root of Morality; and in addition to these, others have gradually, from age to age, accumulated, and have become part of the moral treasure of mankind;—an imperishable treasure; for which the gratitude of mankind is due to those who, in each generation, have made additions to it, by stamping upon men's minds moral truths in forms fitted for immortality.

I believe some persons in our day entertain views, more or less distinct, opposed to these. They do not think that there is a Morality,—a body of Moral Truth,—which goes on perpetually augmenting, by adding to the Truths which we have inherited from our Fathers, those which wise Teachers in our own time teach us. They do not believe that Moral Truth can be thus accumulated. They do not allow that Ideas can thus be transmitted from generation to generation;—acquired by one person and conveyed to others. They would, perhaps, express their meaning by saying, that the Moral Truth which each man possesses, he must win for himself, by his own internal efforts, and not by passively accepting the Ideas and Doctrines of others. They would say, that Moral Truth is not anything which a man can receive and have; it is a part of himself. It is not a possession, but a condition of the man himself. They would not deny our obligations to the great and good men of other times, who struggled to obtain, and fought to preserve, Moral Truths; but they would say that they deserve our gratitude, for what they taught by their example, not for what they taught in verbal doctrines. They have taught us, not that we must believe what they be-

lieved, and know what they knew ; but that we must struggle, as they struggled, to be morally good and great, as they were. They were good and great men, and we must try too, in this our generation, to be good, and, if such be our vocation, to be great also. But this we must be, not by acquiring this Truth and that Truth in succession ; not by learning this virtue and that virtue, as if we might put them on successively. We must learn Truth by *being* true men ;—must acquire virtue by *being* good men. And the way to be the fit successors of the good and true men who have gone before us, is to be what they were ; not to repeat their sayings, or to claim men's assent to their systems ;—transitory and perishable schemes, which had no other value than to make them what they were.

I hope I have stated fairly and decidedly,—I am sure I have tried to do so,—the views of those who are disposed to reject the notion of a System of Morality consisting of ancient as well as modern truths ;—growing from age to age ;—retaining the old and yet adding the new ;—not only reverencing the virtues, but using the labours, of those ancient men. This is such a system as we look for ; and I have tried to express the opinions, or, I ought rather perhaps to say, the feelings, of a class of thinkers who are disposed to reject any such system at once, and on general, and as I may say, *à priori* grounds, without attending to the special features and reasonings of the system which we may have to offer to them. And having stated the views of those opponents, I must state what I conceive to be the proper reply to them.

To the assertion, that we must imitate the good men of other times by being good men, and not by adopting their views of goodness, I reply, that so far as their views were true, we must do both ; but that the former part of our task, however much more important it may be,

is not the part with which we are here concerned. We come here to look-at the subject of morality in a contemplative manner. If any man comes to us, and says, "Why do you sit here discoursing about virtue? Get up. Go out into the world, and *be* virtuous." We reply, That is our object: but we are reasonable beings; we cannot help wishing and trying to understand what we do, as well as to do something. We cannot understand, without giving some tranquil times to thought;—times of inaction, if you choose; and this is one of these. If you do not choose to join with us in such deliberations, go you forth, and be virtuous; and may all good omens attend you! Go if you will, and be virtuous, without knowing what it is to be virtuous. But do not blame us, if we, inevitably bound to you and to all mankind, by the universal tie of language, wish to know what our words mean. Do not blame us, if we, whose lives are knit up of filaments that run in all directions, connecting the past and all its thoughts and experiences, with the present;—connecting every part of our existence, by lines of thought along which reason can trace her way;—do not wonder if *we* try to trace some of these threads. We think this knowledge may better enable us to deal with the subtle and complex web;—to draw it without straining, to unfold it without rending. And if any of those who have gone before us have laboured at the same task;—as, indeed, in every age all the most virtuous and thoughtful of men *have* done;—do not blame us, if we are willing to learn of them in this matter;—if we treasure up the knowledge which they have left us on this subject. In the very texture of language are traces, many and manifold, of their views with regard to the texture of man's nature and life. Why should you think it strange or wrong, that we are curious in studying and understanding these? In their books, in which they recorded what, in their calmest and best moments,

seemed to them to be true, are many things to which our hearts and minds respond,—which seem to us also to be true. Why should you wish us to forget these utterances, and to begin our own internal labours, as if we could find no such assistance in the past ;—no such means of reaching, at once, an advanced stage in our journey ?

You say that we are to imitate them in being good men, but not to analyze their goodness. But not to analyze, more or less, is not to think. How are we to know that they *are* good men, or in what their goodness consists, if we are not to analyze ? If we are to imitate good men, we must have some knowledge what goodness is, in order that we may select our models. We find that, in order to make a difference between those who are good men and those who are not, we must resolve goodness into certain elements, into certain conditions. You look upon this as a shocking proceeding ;—a kind of dissection of goodness. But if it had not been for such a dissection, the word could never have been used. How large a step of generalization and abstraction is that, by which you pass from Socrates and Cato, the living facts which you call men, to the general notion or general name of *goodness* ! And what do you know of those living facts, but what you have learnt by means of language, in which, at every step, this analysis is supposed and performed ? How many truths, with regard to virtue and human nature, are supposed in any praise which you can give to such men ! and why should we be prevented from using these truths, in our way, for our purposes, as you use them, in your way, for your purposes ? Your way of using these truths is to imply them, in your praise of these virtuous men : Ours is, to express them *as* truths, teaching us what virtue is.

You say we ought to imitate these men in their struggles towards truth and virtue ; in the energy, the courage, the

self-devotion which they displayed in that undertaking. We are quite willing to do so: but if anything could dissuade us from the attempt, it would be your representation, that in struggling for moral truth, they were seeking a delusion. They were trying to grasp an immortal fruit, as they thought, and they merely caught hold of something that perished in the snatching. This must be the state of the case, if the truths for which they lived and died are true no longer;—if the only thing admirable in their act was its being an act. It seems as if, on this view, we must assent to the sad reflection of the unhappy ancient moralist, who, parting with life in all the bitterness of despair, exclaimed that he had pursued virtue as a reality, and found her to be but a shadow.

But again. Is a struggle necessarily an object for imitation? Are courage and energy really qualities always and invariably to be aimed at and exercised? Surely not. There is the courage of guilt: the energy of revenge. You would not have us imitate these. If indeed you did wish us to do so, it would be because courage and energy are virtues, and always virtues; and thus, you would have recourse to analysis as well as we. And so you have. But this is not your analysis. You do not make all courage and all energy to be virtues. When you praise courage and energy you mean courage and energy in discovering and proclaiming truth: or courage and energy in asserting and upholding what is right. And thus you are thrown, as we are, upon the fundamental and elementary conceptions of the subject, and upon their combinations with the other elements of human nature. Since then, you, like us, are thus driven for a moment at least, to define and analyze, to combine and deduce, why should you be reluctant and discontented at having been led so far, by the train of your thoughts, on the way to permanent truth? Why, when you

have obtained some definite conceptions and clear propositions, should you think it a merit, to relapse, at the next step, into confusion and disorder, and refuse to let even your own most solemn declarations stand as fixed doctrines? Why should you wish, like children, to write your moral sentences on the sea-sand at the edge of the coming tide, and laugh to see the next wave wipe them away; and not rather inscribe, upon the enduring rocks, marks which may remain, however the billows rise and fall, boil this way or that; and which, being thus permanent, may enable the sailor to direct his course over the variable waters?

Indeed it is well for us that we can thus separate the permanent and consistent part of good men from that which is accidental and incongruous;—that we can fix upon what is characteristic, and pass by what is inconsistent;—that we can see what belongs to the idea of goodness, and what is merely a personal attribute of the man. It would be unfortunate for our moral progress and moral being if we were driven to conduct ourselves by example, not by reason; and to take as the object of our example and admiration, not a man's virtues in the abstract, but the man himself in the concrete, virtues and vices altogether. For who is there, of human creatures, so perfect that we may thus fashion ourselves in his mould? and if there be such a person, where shall we find, and how shall we select him? And if we choose wrong, what moral perversion and degradation must arise from such a mistaken course! How must it depress the standard of humanity which we are capable of rising to in our minds, to bring it thus to coincide with this or that man, weighed down, as all are, with imperfections, blindnesses, weaknesses!

It will be said, perhaps, that virtue in the abstract is too hollow, too shadowy, too cold, too uninteresting, for us;—that we want to have it embodied in persons, in order that

we may really understand and love it. To this I reply, that we, too, suppose virtues embodied in persons;—that this is what we mean by conceiving such things clearly. We must understand what we mean when we talk of virtue and goodness; and we cannot understand what we mean by such words, except we conceive them embodied in persons. We are as willing as any can be, to contemplate virtue and goodness, justice, benevolence, existing in man, and manifested in act; but then, we must be allowed to judge of each act, whether it is virtuous and good, just and benevolent. We cannot shut our eyes and our minds and say: It was the act of such or such a person, and therefore must be worthy of admiration. We cannot say this of any act of mortal men. If, indeed, you point to a model of human character, which is much more than human, and in which dwells all the fulness of moral perfection, we know well what you mean, and we assent with reverence: but such a contemplation does not belong to this stage of our speculations; and we trust that we are taking a course such as our reason directs us to take, when we fix our attention, in the first place, upon these conceptions of virtue and goodness, justice and benevolence, which rise up in our own bosoms; and when we thus prepare ourselves for any other and external moral teaching that we may receive, and moral example that may be placed before us.

Perhaps I may have appeared to some of you to dwell too long upon such objections as I have been discussing. In my excuse, I can only say that I have often seemed to myself to hear such objections floating in the air around us; and that, so far as they are entertained in the minds of my hearers, it is necessary to combat them, and if I can, to extinguish them; because all further labour in constructing a system is futile, till these obstacles are removed. To

those who believe that a system of permanent moral truth cannot be, and that, if it could be, it would be a bad thing, we address ourselves in vain with the evidence of our particular system, however demonstrative may be its character. The *à priori* averseness to system makes men insensible to such demonstration ; for though they may not be able to point out any fallacy, yet when the sound of its logic has died away on their ears, they return soon to the belief that a fallacy there must somewhere be. I hope, therefore, that I have satisfied you that we may reasonably attempt to construct a System of Morality, meaning thereby, a Body of Moral Truths definitely expressed and arranged according to their rational connection. I trust I have shewn that there is no reasonable or tenable objection to such an undertaking, either in its recognising the different faculties of the mind, and other elements of human nature, and the usual names for them ; or in its accepting, as logically valid, reasoning employed upon moral questions ; or in the supposition that there are, in Morality, First Principles or Elements of Reasoning : or in the dependence of morality upon consciousness ; or upon fact. I have tried to shew that a moral system is not necessarily chargeable with verbal hollowness, or with lifeless fixity ; that the permanence of ancient truths does not interfere with modern vitality, nor the contemplation of moral abstractions with our regards towards men as persons. I have tried to give form and expression to objections of this kind, which I thought might be earnestly urged or latently felt, by some of the men of our day ; and then, to bring into clear light the views by which, as I conceive, their untenable and self-destructive nature is shewn.

But there may be persons, on the other hand, who may be impatient, and indeed, I will say I think not unnaturally impatient, of this extent of preliminary discussion. They

may be disposed to say, "Spare yourself all this labour of proving that there *may be* a Moral System, by shewing that there *is* one. We will believe the possibility, when we see the fact. *We*, at least, will not deny that what is, may be. If you can demonstrate moral truths, we will believe them to be demonstrated. If you can connect them logically, we will believe them to be logically connected. When you have constructed such a system as you describe, all *à priori* arguments to prove that it cannot be constructed, must melt away. If there be any self-contradiction or impossibility in the attempt, it will appear in the execution. When such a system is offered to us, if it be fallacious, the fallacy will exist in some definite part or parts, and may be pointed out. When we have once got in our possession any science, chemistry for instance, or physiology, composed of solid truths; it is to no purpose that any *à priori* objector maintains that we cannot know anything about the component elements of bodies,—cannot know anything about the vital powers of men. The same is true of Morality; If a System of Morals be propounded, it must be true or false. If false, it must be false in its fundamental assumptions, or illogical in its deductions from them. Bring before us your system, that we may judge whether it is either the one or the other of these; and do not weary us with multiplied proofs that *some* system of Morality may be true; which proofs, even if they are perfectly valid, are just as much proofs of any other system as they are of yours."

Such an invitation, if it be given me, I gladly accept. This is the point at which I wish to arrive, in order that, from that, I may start onwards. Let us be tried by our works. Let men lay aside their preconceived notions against moral systems in general, and give a candid hearing to the system of which we have to speak; and of course, by all means, to other systems also, when they in like manner claim

a hearing. Let our hearers say whether or not, after mature deliberation, each step of our System corresponds to the description which we have given of that idea of a system which we have before us; and after this examination, let them form of Systematic Morality the judgment to which they are thus led.

It shall be my business, in the ensuing lectures, to enable my hearers to pronounce a verdict upon this question.

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## LECTURE IV.

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### CONSTRUCTION OF THE SUPREME RULE OF HUMAN ACTION.

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I HAVE hitherto been employed, in this course of lectures, in dealing with preliminary difficulties and objections to such a system of Morality as that to which I wish to draw your attention. I hope I have succeeded in removing the objections, so far as they may have existed in the minds of any of my hearers; I hope I have satisfied them that there is nothing inherently incongruous or absurd, in the notion of a System of Morality;—that it is consistent with the common habits of human thought;—with the utmost earnestness in right action;—with the most zealous imitation of the goodness of good men;—that it is, in short, if rightly built up, not a mere pedantic and useless toil, but a great and valuable work. I trust I have dwelt so copiously and so clearly on the preliminary objections to Systematic Morality, that I may now go onwards, and point out the leading steps in the System which I have to offer you. I shall accordingly proceed to do so, as simply as I can.

The System of Morality which I have here to offer you, is the same in its import and connection as that which I have published in print: but I shall present it to you here in a different form; or rather, shall give a brief sketch of it from another point of view; for here, my object is to point out the mutual dependence of the parts; but in the book, my object was to give the due expansion of each part. I shall be glad to have this opportunity of exhibiting, I hope

in a clear manner, the mutual dependence of the leading propositions of the System ; for I have reason to believe that the connection of these propositions with each other has been, by some persons, missed or mistaken, in a manner which I could not have supposed possible, but which I hope may, by explanation, be obviated in future.

I have already stated that, according to my view of Systematic Morality, it must include, or rather must consist of, the common moral convictions of mankind, expressed in the language usually employed for that purpose, only taking care to avoid ambiguity and laxity ; and that it must connect their convictions by such reasons and arguments as are commonly used to convince men ; arranging these reasons and arguments in a coherent and orderly manner. I do not conceive that it is the business of a moral system to discover new duties, or new reasons for duties ; but to point out, in the best order which can be devised, the duties which are generally acknowledged as belonging to men ; and to assign, for these duties, the reasons which make men acknowledge them as duties, arranging these reasons in such a way that they rise out of one another in a connected order. It would not fall in with my view of the Moral System at which I aim, that it should startle us by new and strange assertions ;—by new precepts, or new and paradoxical reasons for old ones. There may be moral systems in which all moral rules are deduced from a certain principle or principles, by paths of reasoning which, though ingenious and logical, express propositions different from the common belief of men thinking calmly on such subjects. If there be such systems, I give no judgment respecting them. They may be good or may be bad : but the system I seek is not of that nature. It is to be a system in which common propositions are to be expressed in common words ; common words are to have their common meaning ; and the connection of the

truths of which the system consists is to be contained in this meaning of common terms ; the meaning being rendered distinct and steady, as is requisite for this purpose. And this being the case, we shall naturally often have to consider what the meaning of words is ; and how it may be fixed and made clear ; and how, when this is done, the meanings of different words are related to each other.

To begin our task then. What are the most general and simple terms in which those matters are spoken of, which are the business of Morality ? I have just used one of them ;—*Duty*. But what is *Duty* ? We can express its meaning more simply and idiomatically by another term. It is what we *ought* to do. But what is that which we *ought* to do ? We cannot, I think, express this more simply ; but we may express it otherwise, by saying it is that which it is *right* to do. And this adjective *right* with its opposite *wrong*, expresses, in the most general and simple manner, that quality of actions in virtue of which they are the subject of moral consideration. Morality is the consideration of actions as right and wrong. This, I think, corresponds to the common notion of moral differences of actions ; and is, for us, a complete description of the field of contemplation with which we are here concerned.

But now that we are arrived at this great fundamental distinction of *right* and *wrong*, how shall we proceed ? We shall have to determine what is right, and what is wrong ; and how shall we arrive at such a determination ? Will any consideration of the ordinary meaning and use of the words help us here ?

I think it will. I think everybody will assent to *this* character of the adjective *right* :—it renders *a reason* for actions. Why must I do this or that ? keep my word for instance ? Because it is right. That is a sufficing reason,

if it be true. There may be other reasons; but that at least, is a good one. You may doubt whether it *be* right; but if it be right, you cannot doubt that *that* is a reason for doing it.

Not only so, but it is a reason which leaves us nothing to ask beyond. If you ask, why I am to do what is right, I reply, because it *is* right. The reason for *that* is in itself. It being right, is the best reason for doing anything.

No other reason is thus final and sufficient. If I ask why I must keep my word, and you say, because otherwise I shall be blamed, I still ask why I should avoid being blamed? You tell me perhaps that it is unpleasant. But this is not an ultimate reply, for it may often be right to do what is unpleasant; and if so, its being right is a reason for doing it, in spite of its being unpleasant. I speak of *right* absolutely used. For *right* may be used relatively; as if I say that to keep my word is the *right* way to make men trust me. Here *right* does not express any ultimate and final reason of actions, but only a reason relative to the object there mentioned, the making men trust me. But *right*, used absolutely, expresses an ultimate reason. This, I also say, is a supreme reason; it may have others subordinate to it, but it has no reason to which it is subordinate. A man labours in order that he may get money. He wishes to get money in order to educate his children. He wishes to educate his children because it is right. This is the supreme reason.

You may say that the man wishes to educate his children because he loves them; and that this is *his* ultimate reason. But this cannot satisfy the Moralist; for it would equally be a reason for his indulging them when they torment and injure their neighbours. The mere affection is not an ultimate reason for the Moralist, except the act be also right.

In our speculations, then, actions are contemplated as right or wrong: and the meaning of *right* has this character;—that, used absolutely, it renders an ultimate and supreme reason for actions.

The Reasons of actions thus given may be spoken of also as *Rules*; the Rule being related to the Reason, as the means to the end, or as the way to the object. Hence the Reasons given in what I have said may be expressed in Rules such as these, "Labour that you may get money." "Get money that you may educate your children." And the Moral Rule in such cases is that the action is *right*. "Educate your children because it is right:" and thus *right*, the adjective, means *conformable to the Supreme Rule of Human Action*.

We are thus led to perceive that there is a Supreme Rule of Human Action; without, as yet, at all being led to see *what* the rule is. To determine *that*, must be our business hereafter. But for the present, I hope you will allow that such a Rule is supposed and pointed at in the meaning of the adjective *right*. When we say that an action is *right*, we mean that it is conformable to a supreme, ultimate rule, which requires and admits of no further reasoning.

But we are not alone in the world: we have, each of us, to act as a man among men. Our actions are important, only as they are concerned with men. They have no moral value or meaning, except that which they derive from their bearing upon men. And each of these men, like ourselves, is a subject of the Supreme Rule of Human Action. He, too, can do what is right; and if what he does *is* right, there is no further reason to be asked or rendered by the moralist for his doing.

But men have various concerns, by means of which they come into contact, and it may be, conflict. Each man

is the center of a sphere, and these spheres may intersect each other. Or rather, each man is the center of various concentric spheres: first, the sphere of his own bodily being, his person;—next, the sphere of his having, his property;—then, the sphere of his close affections, his family;—then, the sphere of his wider affections and regards, his town, his tribe, his nation. And all these spheres, round all these centers, intersect in innumerable lines and points; and give rise to the endless complexity of human affairs and human interests and human actions. But all these actions, interests, affairs, are to be ultimately governed by the Supreme Rule. *That* is everywhere to be, which is right. Such is the requirement of Morality. It is of no avail to tell her that this never can be. That is not the question for her. It is her business to pronounce what ought to be; and that which ought to be, is simply what is conformable to the Supreme Rule of Human Action. Each man must do what it is right he should do;—must have what it is right he should have;—must abstain from that which it is not right that he should have. This is the universal Rule, which Morality cannot help continually uttering, however many deviations from it, and violations of it, there may be.

But what is this Rule, in this application? How are we to construct a Rule, or to make any progress towards constructing a rule, for such a world? How are we to establish equilibrium, or an approach to equilibrium, in so vast and complex a system of things? However difficult this may be, we must not despair; for this is our very task. This is the very business we have before us.

The Rule, whatever it be, must, as I have said, direct that each man should have what it is right that he should have, and abstain from the rest. It determines, if I may so say, the extent of each of those spheres of which I have spoken. By the consequences of the Supreme Rule, it is

determined what is included within each of these spheres for each man. There is that within it which is his, and all without it is not. And when the Supreme Rule has distributed the world into these spheres, which no longer intersect;—when it has placed each man so that he may be, not out of contact with other men, in property, or family, or social interests, but out of conflict with them;—then, indeed, the aspect of Rule becomes apparent through the complexity; then the equilibrium, or at least the moderated motion of this system, becomes no longer manifestly impossible.

Now that which is assigned to each man as his, by the Supreme Rule of Human Action;—that, in short, which it is right that he should have;—is described by a cognate word; and this word, also, is of importance in our progress towards the determination of the Supreme Rule; and the adoption of this word, and the fixation of its meaning, forms our next step. That which it is right that each man should have, is his *Right*. *Right* the substantive includes *right* the adjective, embodied, referred to each man as a center, and made a possession. Each man is to have what is *his* Right.

As I have already said, I am not inventing a new system of the world, but analyzing the actual system, which exists, and always has existed. Men have always tried, more or less, to conform their actions to the Supreme Rule. They have required of each other to do what was right; and as a condition of this, they have allowed each other to have Rights. Each man has had a Right to his own person, his own property, his own family, his own place among his fellows. These Rights have been made Realities among men. The Supreme Law has, to a great extent, actually reigned and been obeyed. Men, by their combined actions, have given it a Reality. They have balanced the impulses which tended to violate the Rule, by stronger impulses which

they themselves supplied. They have restrained desire by fear, and confined each man within the limits of his due sphere, by the application of external force. They have thus determined men's Rights, shaping out the Supreme Rule by subordinate Rules of their own; defining what was indefinite, fixing what was loose. Man's Rights have been determined and enforced by human Laws; but still, by Laws which aimed at being *right*.

But there may be many things which it is right that men should have,—love of children, gratitude, pity, for instance,—which human Laws cannot give: are we to call these *Rights* also? We might do so; this is one of the points on which the usage of language has differed. Men have called these sometimes *Imperfect Rights*; by this form of expression, distinguishing them from *Perfect Rights*, which are defined and enforced by Human Laws. This phraseology is not an essential matter. I think it tends to clearness and simplicity, to confine the term *Rights* to those Rights which Human Laws have made real. I shall so use it. But you will recollect that I mean by *Right*, so used, what those who use the term *Perfect Rights* mean by that term.

*Right* and *Obligation* are corresponding terms, and it is convenient to keep them so. As I use *Right* for *Perfect Right*, established by Law, I use *Obligation* for *Perfect Obligation*, established by Law.

Law, thus determining Rights and Obligations, determines also a portion of the Supreme Rule of Action. We are to discharge our Obligations;—to regard the Rights of others. It is right to do this. It is a part of our Duty.

It is a *part* of our Duty, but it is only a small part. Duty is far wider than Law. Many things are right, which are not mere regard to the legal Rights of other men. How is this? We see plainly that it is so; but how does this view bear upon the problem of the determination of the

Supreme Rule of Human Action, which is our object? What guidance do we obtain from thus comparing the narrow range of Rights, with the wide expanse of what is right? What is the reason of the great difference of compass in the terms?

The reason is plainly this: that men, in determining Rights, have selected only such portions of the Supreme Rule as bear upon visible and tangible things; and upon such actions relative to these, as are of an external and obtrusive character, introducing evident disturbance into the system of which men are parts. Hence they forbid theft, but not covetousness; adultery, but not lust. They are content to keep men's material interests in tolerable balance; they do not deal with the heart and mind. They regulate the external conduct, but do not attempt to reach the internal principle of action.

This satisfies *them*. It is well that it does so: for it is all that they can do. Human Laws cannot do much, in the region of internal principles. But though this satisfies Law, it does not satisfy Morality. *She* must go deeper than this. That she must do so, is evident from what I have said already, of the extent of her domain. Every thing which is or may be right or wrong, belongs to her. Hence, she must have something to do with intentions, as well as acts; for those, too, may be right or wrong. It is wrong to intend to steal, though I do not;—to put my hand in a man's pocket for that purpose, though I find nothing there;—to watch him with that intent, though the eye of the policeman withholds me. Not only intentions, but desires and emotions are wrong. It is wrong to grudge another man's happiness; to have a spite at him. There is a vast and varied field of desires, affections, sentiments, mental processes, all which must be subject to Morality, for all may be right and may be wrong; and the Supreme Law must

include all these ; and must, according to the case, decide which of these two, right or wrong, each of these things is.

Now how are we to make our next step to the determination of the Supreme Rule of Human Action ? We have got, I will suppose, all that Law can do for us ; how are we to obtain that vast addition which we still want ? We have found the footsteps of the Supreme Rule, visible on the earth, in the shape and order of Human Societies, the text of codes of Law. But these are merely the marks of the soles of her feet ; how shall we, from these, delineate her form, as she towers up on high and fills an infinite space ?

Is it possible that, from such a small fragment, we can determine a figure so large ? May we hope that, in morality as in astronomy, the narrow basis which the earth affords us, will enable us to measure the heavens ? Can we look to divine, from the external physiognomy of human nature as seen in Law, the deep-seated thought, the central Idea of that which is right ?

These are important questions for us, in the course in which we are engaged ; for everything, in the construction of our system, depends upon our being able to answer them in the affirmative. It appears to me, then, that we can, by starting from the points we have already established, proceed towards the establishment of that which we seek :—not founding Morality upon Law, but using Law as an indication, knowing that Law is a portion of Morality. I think we may, by proceeding from commands of Law, be able to discern the shape of precepts of Morality. Students in mensuration are taught to determine a distant point, by looking along a short ruler, laid in different places on a table, and noting where the lines converge. We may determine, I think, the central Idea of Morality, in a manner of which this is a kind of image ; for, short as is the canon of law compared with the sphere of mo-

rality, still it points in the right direction; and if we take this direction, and study its tendencies, we shall, I think, be led towards the proper center.

But at the same time that I thus hold, that we may find in positive Laws, indications of the form and structure of Morality, which it must be our business to interpret; I also hold that the power of interpreting these indications is something which we possess entirely in virtue of our Moral Nature. Laws are indications of our moral nature, for they are parts of it; but they are indications of the coarser and more outward parts of it only; and the subtle analysis which our consciousness enables us to apply, is requisite, that we may detect the finer elements in these coarse materials. Laws are a part of the language of our moral nature; and the study of these may help us to decypher the rest of that nature, and to read it into coherent sentences: but Laws themselves are the least significant part of that language. They are like the key to a forgotten language, which the men of our own time found, in the names of sovereigns which it contained. How we are to read our Obligations, so as to see, beyond them, Duties;—how we are to pass from Legality, the Title-page, to Morality, the Contents of the book, I shall soon endeavour to explain: but I observe, beforehand, that to read these, implies that we have a knowledge of the import of such words as Duty and Morality,—a knowledge which no legal teaching could impart: implies that Obligations are most intelligible, when they are discerned to be limited and contracted Duties;—that the title-page must interest us, because it points to the matter of the book. I believe it has been said, that in my published Treatise I make Morality depend upon Law. I think that no one, reading the work with attention, could make such an assertion; but at any rate I hope that now, and as we proceed, you

will see how little foundation there is for such an accusation.

I will state, very briefly, the steps by which, having proceeded so far, I determine the general import of that Supreme Rule of Human Action of which I have spoken. Having shewn, as I conceive, that, as a condition of such a Rule, Rights must exist among men, I find it is necessary, in order to proceed with my plan, to distinguish and classify these Rights. This, again, makes it necessary for me to distinguish and classify the main springs of that human action which these Rights are established to balance and control. I have attempted to point out the most powerful and universal of these springs of action. In doing this, I am not making any strange or novel attempt. I am doing what many others have done before me; and my view does not differ very much from that of some of my predecessors; of Dugald Stewart, for instance. I find that the main springs of action are the Appetites, Affections and Desires: but that the Appetites and Affections may, in their tendency and effect, be summed up and included in certain Desires of a more abstract and general kind; namely, the Desire of Bodily Safety and Wellbeing, the Desire of Having, the Desire of Family Society, and the Desire of Civil Society; and to these must be added, the Desire, or Need, of mutual Understanding; which, though rather a Need than a Desire, is, in its effects, so powerful that we must give it a place co-ordinate with the others. These five Springs of Action may be considered as occupying a primary place in man's nature. Other Desires exist, but they may be looked upon as only collateral to these. Now each of these Springs of Action is kept under control, as we have seen that somehow it must be, by a corresponding form of Rights; and thus we have five kinds of Rights;—Rights of the Person to immunity from violence; Rights of Property; Rights

of Family; Rights of Civil Authority; and Rights of Contract. These five Classes of Rights appear to me to be distinct from each other; and, taken altogether, to include the whole field of ordinary Jurisprudence, or as we may term it, taking the simpler Latin name, *Jus*. Each of these kinds of Rights is the source of jural precepts or commands: *Do no violence: Do not steal: Do not commit adultery: Do not disobey authority: Do not break a contract*. These primary jural commands have each of them a number of accompanying ones, forbidding other forms of the like offences; but these, as primary laws, appear to me to extend over the main field of human action, so far as it is defined by Law.

But I have already said, while Law deals only with external action, Morality, of which Law is a part, has to do with the internal Springs of Action;—with intention, affection, and desire. And as violation of any of the above jural commands is a *Wrong* in the eye of Law, so the intentions and desires which lead or tend to such violation must be *wrong* in the eye of the Moralist. And, therefore, to each of these jural commands, there must be a moral precept, or a line of moral precepts, corresponding. Behind and above each of the Obligations, there must be a Duty.

Thus the jural command, *do no violence*, points to the moral precept, *bear no malice*.

The jural command, *do not steal*, points to the moral precept, *do not seek what is another's*.

The jural command, *do not break your contract*, points to the moral command, *do not deceive*.

The jural command, *do not commit adultery*, points to the moral precept, *do not desire her who is another's*.

The jural command, *do not disobey authority*, points to the moral precept, *do not desire to break the Law*.

And thus, we have five classes of actions from which the moral law warns us ;—Five things which are wrong ;—Five points from which Morality tends,—Malice, Injustice, Fraud, Lust, Lawbreaking.

I do not know whether anything in this statement appears to you doubtful or insecure ; but at any rate, I hope that what I say is simple and intelligible. I express it barely, without any attempt at ornament or variety, that you may see, as plainly as I can enable you to do, the real import of what I am saying.

I hope, too, now, that you will not accuse me of making Morality depend upon Law ; since you again see that I use laws, not as the ground, but only as the indication of the position of what I seek. It is not the foundation of my house, but only a guide-post, a long way off it, which points towards it. And if you allow that this is the case so far, you must acquit me of the accusation altogether. For I have now done with Law. I have made all the use of it I intended or intend, in the establishment of my doctrines. I have found five classes of Wrongs, I have hence been led to see five classes of actions which are wrong. I am already on the road to my object ;—out of the domain of Law, and in the province of Morality. Let us see if we cannot advance onwards.

Five classes of moral Precepts : *Bear no malice ; Do not seek another's goods ; Do not defraud ; Do not lust ; Do not break laws.* Five points from which Morality tends : Malice, Injustice, Fraud, Lust, Lawbreaking. We are on our way to Morality, but we are yet but little advanced on the way. We must get beyond these negative precepts,—these points of repulsion. We must know what we *are* to do, as well as what we are *not* to do. We must discover what Morality tends *to*, as well as what it tends *from*. This is our problem. Let us try to make another step.

Let us look at the things that Morality tends *from*, and see whether there be not, in these, something which points out what she tends *to*. There must be some antithesis in this case; and an antithesis which is perhaps not very difficult to discover. If Morality,—if this supreme Rule of action, tends from Malice, from Ill Will, it must, it would seem, tend towards Good Will, towards Benevolence. If it tend from Injustice, it must tend towards Justice. If it tend from Fraud and Falsehood, it must tend towards Truth. If it tend from Impure Desires, it must tend towards Purity of the Desires. If it tend from Lawbreaking, it must tend towards Lawkeeping and Social Order.

Here, then, we have, it would seem, made a great advance. We have made our way to five points which are much nearer the spot we seek, than those former five points; to Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order. The converging lines of morality, so widely spread before, are here brought near to each other. The Supreme Rule appears to be within our reach. Indeed may we not say, that we have already expressed it? Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity, Order;—surely these constitute the Supreme Rule. The Rule of Human Action is expressed by saying *Be benevolent, be just, be true, be pure, be orderly*. To be this in our actions, is to act rightly.

We have then, at least in an approximate form, what we sought. From the assumption, or rather from the evident truth, that there is a Supreme Rule, we have determined *what* the Rule is. And the steps of our deduction are few and simple. The truth, that there is a Supreme Rule, is implied in the term *right*. The necessity of realizing, in human society, some results and portions of this Rule, gives rise to *Rights*. By considering what these Rights really established among men are, we obtain glimpses and indications of the general character of what is right: and

these indications, though faint and distant shadows of the Idea of Rightness, may yet serve to direct and guide us to that Idea. For in making use of this guidance, we have this advantage, that we know in what direction we are to proceed. In going from Law to Morality, we know that we are to go from outward to inward acts; from doing and having, to intending and desiring; from words and motions, to thoughts and feelings. It is these internal acts, which Morality requires to be right; and knowing that this is the relation of Law and Morality, we can see that, while Law forbids Violence, Theft, Fraud, Adultery and Rebellion, the Morality to which Law points, however blindly and distantly, must be a Morality in which reside Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order.

Such is the Supreme Rule of Human Action; and thus is it collected from the meaning which we imply in the term *right*; from the classes of Rights which exist among men; and from the necessary universality of the Supreme Rule, which must extend to all parts of man's nature;—to his internal being, as well as to his external doing. And having thus arrived at the Supreme Rule, I do not suppose that its import can appear to any one otherwise than natural and familiar. We have been led to it by our classifications of Springs of Action, and of Social Rights; and I do not know that the Rule has commonly been presented in this form: but the import has nothing in it but what you have often heard. “Be kind, be just, be true, be pure, be orderly;”—these are the commands of the most common and everyday Morality;—the Morality of friendly counsel and paternal injunction. And this scheme of Morality is not only familiar, but, I think, tolerably complete. When we have enumerated these five virtues,—Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order,—I think it will be found difficult to add any other which can fitly stand as co-ordinates with

these ; or which is not, for the most part, included in them.

How far this is the case, you will better judge when you examine the scheme of special Duties which we may derive from those five general Duties ; but if this be so,—if these Virtues do thus, in their combined extent, occupy the whole field of Morality,—we may, for the sake of distinction, call them our *Cardinal Virtues*. And we may the more readily adopt this term for our purpose, inasmuch as the ancient scheme of the *four* Cardinal Virtues, and the modern versions of it, are quite useless for the purposes of Morality. Justice, Temperance, Fortitude and Prudence, the old heads of the family of Virtues, give us a division which fails altogether ; since the parts are not distinct, and the whole is not complete. The portions of Morality, so laid out, both overlap one another, or are undistinguishable ; and also, leave parts of the subject which do not appear in the distribution at all. How shapeless is the moral system thus produced, we may see in Cicero's Offices, and other works ; and we cannot wonder at this defect, when we trace the history of these Cardinal Virtues ;—when we see how necessarily incomplete the scheme was at first, on account of the nature of the speculations out of which it arose ; and how its first form has been misunderstood and misrepresented, in subsequent systems of Morality.

But you may say, perhaps, that these five names of Virtue help us little to be virtuous ;—that whether we have that old quaternion, or our new circle of five, placed at the head of our Morality, is a matter of small consequence, in making us moral ;—that these precepts : “ be kind ; be just ; be true ; be pure ; be orderly ; ” are no doubt right and wise, but they are also vague and ineffective. You will ask, perhaps, how we are to profit by them ;—how

we are to discover their import in particular cases ;—how we are to learn what it is, to be just, to be pure, and the like. You may say that except we can learn this, our Rule is no Rule ;—our solution of the Problem fails ;—we have all still to do. You will enquire where we are to get such help as will make this Rule significant ;—as will give to our result a real value.

Undoubtedly these are the next enquiries to which we are driven ;—What it is to be just, to be true, and the like. And these are enquiries to which we shall proceed. But because we have to make these enquiries in particular cases, it does not follow that we have yet made no progress in our original enquiry. It is something, to have the enquiry put into a new and more especial form ;—to have the question, *What is right?* resolved into these other questions, *What is just? What is true?* and the like ; and this is so especially, if the new questions be really a complete and consistent distribution of the original question. And that this is a step in the enquiry, we are confirmed in believing, by finding that such a resolution of the enquiry into parts, agrees with the course which men follow, when they wish to ascertain whether actions be right. To show that they are such actions as Justice or as Truth require, is that which they attempt to do, in their moral examination of their own and other men's actions : and if we can frame a system of which the reasonings fall in with, follow, and complete, the spontaneous course of their moral reasonings, we shall have such a system as I, from the first, declared to you we ought to seek to form.

And if we turn to these questions, What is Benevolence? What is Justice? What is Truth? And what do they require in particular cases, so that they may be consistent with themselves? we have no ground, in our course of proceeding, for deeming the questions hopeless ;—nor do

we fail to find some indications of the nature of their solution, in the previous part of our progress. We have already been led to doctrines which may afford us assistance in this new part of our task. For instance :—if our question be, What is required, in any particular case, by Truth? meaning thereby, of course, Truth in the person who has to act ;—Subjective Truth, as it is called ;—Truthfulness, or Veracity? this question naturally leads us to turn back in our thoughts, and consider how this idea of Truth enters into our system. And we then recollect that we found, among the Desires and Needs of man, the Desire, or rather the Need, of a mutual understanding with other men, which we must have, so that we may depend upon their actions, and they upon us. Without such an understanding, it is easy to see, and to show, that no moral, nor indeed human society, could subsist. This mutual understanding is established by the use of Language : and in some cases, the Law enforces this understanding, making the fulfilment of it a Right on one side, and an Obligation on the other ;—namely, in *Contracts*. But this Right of Contract, although, being a Right, it is a result of the Supreme Rule of Human Actions, is only the jural result of that Rule. The moral result of the Rule, followed in the same line, must go much further, much deeper. It must forbid, not only breach of contract, which the Law forbids, but every violation whatever of that mutual understanding of men which is the origin of the jural Rule ; and even every intention to violate it. The Moral Rule will forbid, not only breach of contract, but simple breach of promise, fraud, deceit, lies, and falsehood in every form. These are the results of the establishment of Truth as part of our Supreme Rule. These are the Duties which belong to Truth. We have already, here, as you see, a part, and not a small part, of a System

of Morality, so far as we give that name to moral Rules of action.

And we may follow out and define these Rules still further. For example: in the case just referred to,—the Duties of Truth. I am to do what I have promised: I am to tell no lie. But though all grant this in general, difficulties often occur in particular cases. Language is indefinite often, often ambiguous. Circumstances are complex:—some of them are overlooked or forgotten, when we promise, or when we narrate or assert; some of them change unexpectedly; some are mistaken. Hence, it may often become a question, What have I promised? Is what I have said a lie?—How are we to answer such questions? For an answer to them is plainly necessary, to complete our Rules of Action.

Here, again, we shall find guidance in the course of deduction by which we have been led so far. What have I promised? The words I used were ambiguous. I employed them in one sense. You, to whom I uttered them, received them in another. Which of these, or what, is the sense in which the Rule applies to them;—that promises are to be performed by him who makes them? Let us look back. The promise was an example of the establishment of that mutual understanding which is a universal need of mankind. It is, then, as a mutual understanding, that the promise is to be viewed. What we two in common understand by the words,—*that* it is which I have promised, and must perform:—not, that which I meant, and which you did not suppose me to mean, but what you understood;—not that which you understood, but which I could not suppose you to understand; but the mutual understanding;—that which I understood you to understand. This, then, it thus appears from our principles, is the rule of interpretation of promises. It is, as you know, the

Rule commonly given by Moralists ;—by Paley, for instance. It is the rule of the common sense of mankind : and it follows, as you see, from the views to which we have been led, and the course of reasoning which we have pursued. Do not let us be reproached, then, with a barren and unprofitable treatment of our subject, which makes no progress, and leads only to truisms and identical propositions. It leads to such propositions as have always had a place, both in the moral systems of philosophers, and in the morality of common life ; and if it give, as I trust it will be found to give, its due place and bearing to each of these propositions ;—if it arrange in an orderly shape, and refer to first principles, those reasons for such propositions, which men in general accept as satisfactory, and as the true reasons ; it is such a system as I seek, and such, I hope, as you will approve.

It would be easy to give other instances of the application of our mode of dealing with Moral questions ; and especially, questions concerning Duties of Truth. For instance ; take a common question :—May I tell a lie to preserve my secret ? I am the author of an anonymous work,—Junius, Waverley, an article in a Review ;—it is important to me to remain unknown as the author. I am asked if I am the author : or I am charged with being so. Am I compelled to confess ? am I allowed to deny ? To this I reply negatively to both enquiries. I am not compelled to confess ; but I am not allowed to deny. I am not allowed, by the Rules of Morality, to say what is not true, because to tell the truth is inconvenient or disagreeable. The Rule of Truth, the Conception of Truth, admits of no such exception. The Rule cannot be, Never tell a lie except when to tell the Truth is inconvenient or disagreeable to you. Such a Rule would destroy the very nature of Truth.

It is not what we mean by Truth. It is a rejection of the universal understanding which prevails among mankind. It is using words in a sense in which I know mankind do not understand me to use them. I may not, therefore, deny. I may not say *No*, when they ask me if it is so. But must I say *Yes*? must I confess? By no means. I am under no such necessity. I may be silent. I may refuse to answer. I may put aside the enquiry. You say that this would be really to confess, or at least to disclose the truth; that it would be so interpreted; and that I am, in this way, robbed of my secret. I reply, that whether my answer is understood as a disclosure, must depend upon the skill with which I frame it, and put the question by: but that if it is so understood, *that* is a necessary consequence of writing an anonymous book, and then associating on familiar terms with acute and inquisitive friends. If I am not a match for them in the light skirmish of colloquial attack and defence, I had better keep out of their way, when I am laden with such a secret. To say that I may lie, in order that I may not be robbed of my secret, is to say that I may preserve an unrecognized possession by violating recognized rules. It is as if I should claim, as my own property, a field which other people look upon as common, and protect myself in it, not by a visible fence, but by invisible pitfalls.

I have followed these views somewhat into detail, not on account of the importance of the question which I have referred to, but to shew that those views lead us into details, and give us solutions of little questions, as well as of great ones,—guidance in the lesser morals, as well as the larger. The question I have last considered is a very inadequate specimen of the great questions with which Morality is most concerned;—but Morality, if it be complete and systematic, must also extend to and solve such questions as this.

Whenever the question, *What is my Duty?* can be asked, our Morality ought to be able to give an answer; or at least, to point out in what direction we are to look for an answer, and on what kind of principles it must depend. And I hope you see that our System complies with the conditions of a System, in doing this for us;—in giving us counsel and direction in such a case.

Cases of the inquiry, *What is our Duty?* such as that which I have just discussed, are called *Cases of Conscience*: for Conscience is the Faculty, whether real or acquired, however formed and improved, by which we judge what is our Duty; and to instruct the Conscience, so that it may rightly answer such questions of Duty, is the business of the Moralist. To pronounce upon such Cases of Conscience, has long been a leading part of the scheme of Moral Systems, and has been termed *Casuistry*. Yet this subject, of Cases of Conscience, and this term *Casuistry*, have often been looked upon, by those who think of such matters lightly and loosely, with suspicion and dislike, as if such discussions had really an immoral tendency. The poet speaks of

Morality by her false guardians drawn,  
Chicane in furs, and Casuistry in lawn.

This result has arisen, I think, from this cause:—that in many cases, those who were interested in such questions did not simply ask the question, but wished to wrest the answer to one side;—they did not merely want to hear what was their Duty, but to find that their Duty was consistent with their inclination:—they did not ask what they *ought* to do, but what was *allowable*:—as in the case which I mentioned, it was asked, whether it be allowable to tell a lie in order to guard a secret. I think that this disposition of the interrogators has tended to bring Casuistry into disrepute;—and justly, if the Moralist, in his reply, has ever lent himself to

indulge this disposition, and has moulded his response so as to gratify his client. But this is no fault of Morality. So far as any one has done this, he has not been a true Moralist: he has been a bad Casuist. The true Moralist answers all such questions according to the form I have referred to: *You ought to do this: Here lies your path of Duty.* He does not willingly adventure himself into the region of things *allowable*. He is constantly employed in narrowing that region. He is constantly discovering reasons why things, at first seen as indifferent, are right or wrong. As his light increases, all things take a moral colour. And by this light he answers Cases of Conscience, that is, Questions of Duty. It appears to me that such light is best obtained by proceeding as we have done;—by going to the central Ideas of Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order, and by tracing where their rays fall. But whether a Moralist adopts this course or any other, he must, somehow, attain a light for this purpose. He must be able to answer Questions of Duty. He must have some method of solving Cases of Conscience. When a man, wishing to do right, and labouring in the agony of a struggle of apparently conflicting Duties, asks the Moralist, what he ought to do: it will not suffice that the Moralist should tell him that Cases of Conscience are mischievous and corrupting things;—that they arise out of some sinister influence, some vicious propensity lurking in the heart. This may be so: but this, uttered in general terms, with whatever vivacity of imagery and vehemence of manner, does not help the poor enquirer in the particular case. He wants to learn *which* is the sinister side of the question; which is the worse and which the better way. If the Moralist cannot tell him this, how is he a Moralist? or what is the value and application of his speculations?

Do I then mean that the Moralist is to have his col-

lection of numbered Questions, and his ready-made answer to each?—that he is to give his replies,—Under such circumstances, you must do this; under such other circumstances, thus otherwise? Is this the amount of our Morality? Very far different indeed is it. Our replies to moral enquiries cannot be merely, You must *do* thus and thus. We know well,—our whole scheme is derived from our knowing,—that *doing* is but a small part of Morality:—that what we do, is but the outgrowth of what we intend, and desire, and are: and that in these, the essence of Morality consists. Our replies to questions as to what men must do, will necessarily take this aspect;—They must do that which will tend to make their moral being most truly moral. They must do that which will most tend to fix and fasten in their hearts Operative Principles of Benevolence, of Justice, of Truth, of Purity, of Order. What they must do, must depend upon their internal being, as well as upon their external circumstances. What they must do, will not be the same for all; for all are not at the same point of moral progress. What men must do, will indeed be governed by general Rules, because the Supreme Rule is the same for all; but the terms in which the results of this Rule are expressed, will have a different significance in the cases of different persons. The same light of heaven is requisite for the developement of every flower; but yet how different are the colours and the shades which it assumes, as it works in the living veins of one flower and another!

This, then, is *our* Casuistry. In giving this slight indication of its character, I have used several phrases which may seem to point at matters lying beyond that field over which I have travelled in the previous part of these lectures, and which really do so point. But those phrases have not been used at random. The notions to which I have thus rapidly referred have not been brought in idly and loosely, to fill a

place in a sentence. This Limitation of Things Allowable ; —these Conceptions of Moral Progress, and of Operative Principles of Truth, Purity, and the like, which are constantly to be cultivated and fostered in our hearts ;—these are parts of the System. Some of you may be aware that they are : all, I think, will see that they may be so, in full consistency with the course which we have been following.

I trust then that I have, in this rapid view, made it apparent, that the method which I have pursued does lead, in succession, to the conviction that there is a Supreme Rule of Human Actions ; to the perception of the nature of this Rule ; the determination of its elements ; the deduction of its results in particular cases ; the solution of questions of Duty in a manner, which though definite, is truly moral. If you find that our System does this, still conforming to those characters which, in the outset, I pointed out, as the conditions of a satisfactory system, you will perhaps have something not without its value ; but at any rate, you will have that which it was my hope and ambition to bring before you.

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## LECTURE V.

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### LAW AND MORALITY.

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IN my last Lecture, I gave a rapid view of the course which my speculations followed, in framing a System of Morality, and of the general aspect of the System thus resulting. As I then said, the fundamental notion of Morality is that it is the Doctrine of actions as right and wrong. But to speak of actions as *right*, implies the actual and legal establishment of *Rights* among men. This leads us to the Doctrine of Rights and Wrongs. And without going into the details of that Doctrine, we see, from its general classification of Rights, what must be the shape of a portion of Morality, for Law is a portion of Morality. But we know that Morality must go far beyond Law, and must do this in an inward direction. It must go to virtues of the heart, as well as actions of the hand. And thus we are led to see that Morality must have, for its elements, these Virtues,—Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order. These are the component parts of that Supreme Rule of Action, of which, from the first, we saw the necessity, and of which we wished to determine the substance.

One step of the process by which we arrived at the Rule of Human Action was, as I have just intimated, that Rights, and Obligations, the correlatives of Rights, necessarily exist among men; and that these are of five kinds, Rights of the Person, of Property, of Contract, of Family, and of Civil Condition. The course of our Moral speculations requires us to assume so much as this, of the Doc-

trine of Rights and Obligations ;—so much, and no more. But though no more be necessary for us, I have, in the *Elements of Morality*, to which I have already referred, pursued the Doctrine of Rights and Obligations a good deal further. I have traced many of the subordinate classifications and definitions of Rights, according to the laws which have actually existed among men ; especially according to two schemes of Law ;—the universal Law of the ancient world, and the actual Law of our own country ;—the Roman, and the English Law. I have done this, because, legal Definitions being a necessary condition in the determination of the moral qualities of actions, it appeared desirable to give a considerable number of examples of such Definitions ; and also, because though this Doctrine of Rights and Obligations, *Jus* or Jurisprudence, is a part of Morality, it is a part of a distinct character from the rest ; and a part which it is very necessary for the Moralist to keep separate from the higher provinces of Morality. This separation has often been neglected, and great confusion thereby caused ; as when Moralists have mixed together the discussion of the Legal Rules concerning the Obligation and Interpretation of Contracts, and the Moral Rules concerning the Duties of Truth, or the results of such Rules in special cases. This mixture and confusion I wished to avoid : and as in the course of our determination of Rules, *Jus* necessarily comes before Morality, I treated those jural, before I treated properly moral questions. But no one, looking with any care at the course of my reasoning could find any ground for asserting that I have, in this way, made my Morality depend upon the details of Law ;—upon the decisions of judges and prætors ;—the sentences of Roman Tribunals and English Courts. That this is not the case, the very structure of my book, if I may be excused an instant for referring to it in detail, most evidently shews.

For though, after establishing certain general principles in the First Book, I treat, in the Second, of Roman and English Jurisprudence, for the reasons which I have mentioned; yet when, in the Third Book, I proceed to Morality, and establish the Rule of Human Action which I have stated; the Second Book is no further made the foundation of this Rule than that, in a single Article (229), the five Classes of Obligations are referred to, and it is inferred, from the known and necessary relation of Law and Morality, that there must be five Classes of Duties, corresponding to those Classes of Obligations. In no instance are the special Maxims of Law referred to in determining our Duties, except in a few cases to suggest the limitations of Duty; as (409) the Law which does not permit us to kill the diurnal thief, or the flying robber, is referred to for the purpose of showing that moderate danger does not justify acts of violence and blood: and the inference is, not that Morality is to be guided by Law, but that, if Law require so much of moderation and humanity, Morality must require much more. And this is the very principle of the reasoning by which we established our Moral Rule; namely, that Morality must be something far beyond Law;—something deeper, higher, wider, purer, brighter;—the precious metal of which law is a fragment of the rude ore;—the living tree of which law is the dried fruit.

There is one sense, indeed, in which Morality depends upon Law, according to our System; and just as much, according to every scheme of Morals that ever was recognized among men. Law supplies the definitions of some of the terms which Morality employs; and without these definitions, Moral Rules would be indefinite, unmeaning, and inapplicable. Morality says, You shall not seek another man's property: Law defines what is another man's property, and what is mine. Morality says, You shall not

desire her who is another's wife: Law determines whether she be his wife. Morality says, Willingly obey or wisely rule, according to your station in civil society: Law determines what your station is. In this way, certainly, our Moral precepts depend for their actual import upon Law. But I do not see how we can have any moral precepts which do not depend upon Law in this sense. To what purpose does Morality say to me, Do not desire the house, or the field, or the wife, or the authority, which is another's; if I am allowed to take out of the hands of the Law the decision of the matter, what or who is another's, and to determine it for myself, in some other way? I, certainly, do not pretend to make Morality independent of Law to this extent. Our Morality does not think it a degradation to listen to the voice of Law, when Law pronounces about matters which especially belong to her;—matters which no other voice can decide, and which must be decided. So far, we accept from Law the determination of certain fixed points in the external world of things, in order that, in the internal world of thought and will, there may be something to determine the direction which thought and will must take.

I cannot but think it strange that I should be accused (the accusation has been made) of making Law the basis of Morality in any other than this, the necessary and universally-allowed sense; for in my published work, I have repeatedly and laboriously,—I should have thought almost importantly,—explained this relation of Morality and Law. I will quote a few sentences that this may be apparent.

“460. Law deals with matters external and visible, such as Objects of desire, (Things,) and Actions, and thus creates Rights. Morality has to do with matters internal and invisible; with Desires and Intentions, as well as with Laws and Rights. Desires and Intentions cannot be defined or described in any way, without some reference to Things and

Actions; and therefore, cannot supply a basis of Morality independent of Law: and thus Morality, in the first place, is dependent upon Law. Rights afford the fixed points by which moral positions are determined. Rights also supply some of the principle forces by which the moral sentiments produce their effect. Law affords a support to the framework of society; but Law does not suffice for the social life of man, without Morality. Law and Morality coincide in their general form and outlines; but Law is stiff and hard; Morality of a more flexible, yet more pervadingly active nature. Law is the rigid skeleton, which Morality clothes with living flesh and acting muscles. Law supplies the fixed positions, on which the Machinery of Duty can rest, so as to move the world.

“461. But though Morality rests upon Law, Law is subject to the Authority of Morality: Law is the Basis of Morality, but yet Morality is the Standard of Law. Law is fixed for the moment, and Morality supposes its fixity: but Morality is a supreme and eternal Rule, which Law must recognize. Law must always attempt to conform to Morality. Thus, though the Law is, in the first instance, assumed to be fixed, and though its commands are accepted as absolute and peremptory; it is not to be considered as entirely and finally unchangeable. The commands of Law are themselves liable to be judged of, as good or bad. They, and their application in particular cases, may be morally wrong, as well as right.”

I have spoken to the same effect when describing the relation of Law and Justice; (494, 495) and in other places.

And thus, I trust I have made it appear that though, in my order of proceeding, I pass through Law to Morality, I do not make Morality substantially depend upon Law. But here I may perhaps be met by an objection of an opposite kind;—that though I profess to be governed in my progress

by the classification of Law, I really am directed by other trains of thought ;—that while I speak of being guided by Property, Contracts, and the like, to Justice, Truth, and the other forms of Virtue, I really knew my way to those points perfectly well without such guidance ; and arrived at my object, by means of my previous knowledge, not by aid of the information derived from my guides. You tell us, it may be said, of the spectacles you have used, but nothing of the eyesight which made them available. How were you led, from the mere external arrangements of Property, to the elevated idea of a complete and universal Justice ? How did the provisions and limitations of men with regard to the performance of Contracts conduct you to the idea of absolute and perfect Truth ? Law alone could not do this for you. You must have had something within, not without, to tell you where to find what you were seeking. You had your Morality already in your mind, when you pretended to go abroad to seek it. It was a Moral Faculty of your own which enabled you to find Morality in Law, or to seem to do so. It was a Moral Sense which led you to your Pentad of Virtue ;—your Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order.

To this I reply, that undoubtedly it was in virtue of my being a moral creature, capable of moral Ideas, that I proved those Ideas by such a course as I have described. Undoubtedly, it was in virtue of my having eyesight that I was enabled to use such spectacles. When a man speaks of visible things, he supposes it to be generally understood that he and his hearers can see. And when a man speaks of moral matters, he supposes that he and his hearers recognize a difference of right and wrong : this being a supreme and universal difference, as I said from the beginning ; not growing out of human institutions, but out of which all human Law grows, and to which it tries to conform. If any one says, that to make such a supposition to proceed upon a

Moral Faculty, I offer no objection to such a form of expression. I have not found such phrases necessary in constructing my System; but any one may say, without my contradicting him, that it is in virtue of a Moral Faculty that I recognize, in the Laws of Property and Contracts, a manifestation of Justice and Truth; and that I pass, from these imperfect manifestations, to the perfect and complete Ideas of these qualities. I have all along said that Law only pointed my way, and did not go with me. For ought I know, it may be reasonable to say that a Moral Faculty was my unseen companion, which enabled me to see and interpret the external movements which I saw.

But if you were to say that I had already in my mind, when I began the speculations which have led to the System, the Pentad of Virtues of which I have spoken;—the fivefold division of Duties: I can only reply that I believe this not to be the case; and that, so far as my own knowledge of the course of my own thoughts may be trusted, I was led to this division of Duties by what I found to be a necessary division of Obligations when I gave my attention to the subject of Jurisprudence. I might perhaps refer to the recollection of some of you, who may have attended in former years, lectures in which I explained this my view of the distribution of Morality, as directed by the distribution of Rights, while the view was still new in my mind, and while it was yet incomplete. But I do not wish to insist upon this point with any tenacity. It is a matter of individual history, not essential to my plan. Let it only be allowed that my division of Duties into these five Classes, is a good systematic division, and that the Principle which I have, in my *Elements*, stated as the fundamental *Express Principle* specially belonging to each class, is a solid, indubitable moral Truth, (which I think no thoughtful moralist will deny,) and the rest of the System, the deduction of the modifications of these Duties, which

result by combination with each other, and with external circumstances, will proceed equally well ; and will offer to you, I believe, doctrines and determinations of the kind which most moralists have professed to give ; and which I, in common with them, think the proper business of a Systematic Morality.

The *Express Moral Principles* of which I have spoken, as the basis of Duties, are those which express, in an imperative form, the five Cardinal Virtues : namely, the Principle of Humanity, that *Man is to be loved as Man* : the Principle of Justice, that *Each Man is to have his own* : the Principle of Truth, that *We must conform to the universal Understanding which the use of Language among men implies* : the Principle of Purity, that *the Lower Parts of our nature are to be governed by the Higher* : and the Principle of Order, that *We must obey positive Laws as the necessary conditions of Morality*. I have, in a former Lecture, spoken of the degree and kind of the evidence of the first of these Express Principles ; and the like remarks might be made upon the others. They commend themselves to our assent, in proportion as our moral nature is cultivated and educated : they become evident to us when we think and feel as really moral creatures. The perception of them may be obscured by the influence of the ferine part of our nature ;—by savage rudeness, passion, partiality : but in proportion as the ferine element is subdued, and the human element brought out in its proper force, these Principles are accepted. When man judges as man and for man, he is enabled to see their full meaning ; and with their meaning, their truth.

From these Principles—*Express Principles*, as I have been in the habit of calling them, to distinguish them from Benevolence, Justice and the rest, established as *Operative Principles* in our hearts,—we may deduce, as you will not have much difficulty in supposing, the greater part of our obvious Duties : and from the Duties, or along with them,

the Virtues, which are those habits of internal feeling or action from which the performance of Duties naturally proceeds;—that internal circulation of wholesome juices, by which are outwardly put forth blossoms and fruit. The list of Virtues to which we are thus led is not marked by anything original or striking. Our Virtues are those which are commonly so called. We make no pretensions to discover new Virtues. It is enough for us if we can arrange those which the lovers of Virtue have always acknowledged, in a convenient and orderly way; so that their connection with each other, their shades and combinations, may become apparent.

And perhaps the common and familiar names of Virtues, which are in everybody's mouth, may suggest to us that our list of the Principles from which we were to derive Duties and Virtues is imperfect. For instance, we all speak of Earnestness, Zeal, Energy in a good cause, as Virtuous. And yet perhaps these Virtues do not necessarily result from the five Principles already stated, nor from any combination of them. For Zeal in its commonest shape, is rather at variance, than at one, with Benevolence; it takes the form rather of anger at the enemies, than of love of the friends, of what is right. And the Principle of Justice may be pure in us, and yet so feeble, as not to amount to Zeal. Yet we shall not be satisfied, as Moralists, with a mere preference of what is just and right. We require an earnest love of it, and vigorous efforts to bring it into being; in short, we require Virtuous Zeal. This Virtue, and those which are connected with it, will find a place in our series, if we lay it down, as a moral postulate, not only that the Principles above stated, Benevolence, Justice, and the rest, shall exist, but that they shall be strong and vivid. And hence, I am led to assume among the necessary foundations of our Morality, what I have called the *Principle of Earnestness*; and what, as an Express Principle, I state, by saying that

*The Affections and Intentions must not only be rightly directed, but energetic.* Perhaps this Principle may seem to be so self-evident that it need not be stated. It would be taken for granted in our reasonings, even if it were not put into words. But it is precisely on this account that I state it; for I wish to put into words the moral Principles which are self-evident, and which we necessarily take for granted in moral reasonings. Be they Principles, or Postulates, or Axioms, or whatever you would prefer to call them, (which I have little concern about,) my plan requires me to state them, and this accordingly I have done.

But again: I believe the very thought of doing that to which I am now referring, is distasteful to some persons;—namely, making an enumeration or list of Virtues. They image to themselves the Moralist who does this, as a kind of dealer, who makes up his wares into different packets, and recommends them to his customers. They dislike language which seems to imply that Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Compassion, Meekness, Candour, and the like, are things that can be got hold of, once for all, and kept by us or in us. And indeed, if this really were intended or implied, they would be offended with very good reason. And it very much concerns us so to express ourselves, and so to construct our system, that it shall not labour under the defect of teaching any such doctrine, or conveying any such opinion, as this. It is very important for us to teach that we can possess virtues, only by being virtuous; and that to *have been* virtuous is not necessarily to *be* so:—that Virtue in general, and every virtue in particular, is a living thing, which *is* only while it *grows*:—that the current of Duty must flow from a perennial spring of right thoughts and affections and desires, of which no words can reach the bottom. And since we can act, not only upon external things, and upon other persons, but also upon ourselves, we have here, too, a sphere

of duty. We have it for our business to form within ourselves these springs of duty; or at least, if it is not ours to form them, we have to draw them forth, to encourage their flow, to carry their clearness further and further into the depths of our minds and hearts. We have to cultivate Virtues, as well as to perform Duties:—to become, and to be, as well as to do. It is this recognition of the Duty of Moral Culture, which will prevent our Virtue from being stagnant. We are not only to try to be benevolent and just and true and pure; but always to be *more* benevolent, *more* just, *more* true, *more* pure; to carry these qualities deeper and deeper into our hearts, so that they may more and more give their colour to our intentions, desires and affections\*. Thus only can we save our Morality from being of that rigid and contracted kind, which the expanding heart of man cannot bear;—of that stationary and finite extent, which the progressive soul of man soon leaves behind.

Since this must be so,—since our moral education must be continually going on,—since every action and occasion of action must be a step in this education,—all our means of action must be looked upon as instruments of this education. External things, possessions, condition, society, law, must be used as means of this moral education. All external goods, all objects of desire and affection, may thus acquire a value which of themselves, as merely objects of desire, they have not. They acquire a moral value. We call them *goods*, when we speak of them as objects of our desire, but they are not therefore morally *good*. We desire food, wealth, pictures, music, but there is nothing moral in these desires. Yet these desires may be guided so as to become means of our moral education;—may, at any rate, be restrained so as not to be inconsistent with our moral progress; and this must be done, if we are to accept the guidance of Morality;—if we are

\* See *Elements of Morality*, (300).

not to violate the Supreme Law of our nature. Painting and Music may be so enjoyed as to soften the affections, to refine and elevate the mind; at any rate they must not be so enjoyed as to corrupt the heart, and to dissipate all serious thought. The possession of wealth may be a discipline of internal justice. Each man may have his own. Each man desires his own, by a natural desire, in which there is nothing moral, any more than there is in hunger or thirst. But each man may also desire to possess his own, because he desires that all men should possess their own; and thus, the desire acquires a moral character\*. And except the love of wealth and the use of wealth tend to this character, it cannot enter as an element into our moral education, as these, along with all other desires and actions, ought to do. The love of equal and steady Laws, in the progress of man's moral culture, tends to supersede the love of the wealth which such laws give him. This is evident; for in a moral man, if it once appear that such laws give a portion of his wealth to another, the love of justice at once overcomes the love of riches, and he resigns without a struggle what he so possesses. And in order that this may be clearly brought into view, as a consequence of our Principles, I would place, among those Principles, this;—that all External *things are to be desired as means to Moral Ends*; and this I would call the Principle of Moral Purpose.

In my published Treatise (*Elem.* 271), meaning to express this by saying that *Things are to be desired* UNIVERSALLY *as means to Moral Ends*, I have said: *Things are to be sought ONLY as means to Moral Ends*. But this form of expression may occasion mistake, by seeming to imply that all desires of things for their own sake are to be suppressed. This certainly would be to make our Morality impossible: for we cannot exterminate our desires and affections and

\* See *Elements of Morality*, (307).

appetites ;—our love of food, and property, and friends. Nor does our Morality require us to do so. But it does require us to gratify our desires and affections and appetites in such a way, that not only the Rules of special Duties are not transgressed, but that these very gratifications may enter as fit elements into our Moral Education. As I have said (*Elem.* 433) “it does not appear that the *ascetic* course in which the mortification of the desires of the body is made a direct and primary object, is really well suited to the culture of men in general.” Such a moderate and legitimate gratification of natural desires as keeps the mind and body in healthful and cheerful activity, without allowing the desires themselves to occupy the thoughts, is a favourable condition of Moral Action, and hence, of Moral Education : and as I have stated (*Elem.* 433), we are to aim in our moral culture, not at the ascetic struggle, but at the *Disciplined Spontaneity* which follows this course without effort.

Perhaps I have already sufficiently illustrated the relation of Morality to Law ;—namely, that Law is not the foundation of Morality, but an indication of its place and form ;—not the groundwork, but the guide-post. In our Code, Law is a portion of the Letter, Morality is the whole of the Spirit. But there is an application of this view of the two which it appears to me to be sometimes convenient to make, and of which I will here say a word. Because Morality extends from acts, which are the subjects of Law, to intentions, affections, and desires, its own especial domains ; the Duties which Morality points out have a much wider range and deeper root than the Obligations which Law enjoins. But yet the intentions, desires, and affections, derive their moral character from the act to which they tend. Hence to Obligations, there must be Duties corresponding,

though reaching much further into our being. The Obligations are superficial, but they may serve to mark the direction and position of the Duties: they are like buoys, which float on the surface, and mark the place of the anchor below. They are like some of the easiest words in an inscription which we are trying to decipher: the inscription speaks of things the most profound and abstract, but there are also terms which signify wood and stone, leaves and houses. If we succeed in discovering the key to this inscription, we probably find out, first, the meaning of these terms of common use; and these thus understood, confirm us in our belief that the alphabet and vocabulary which we have adopted are the true ones. And thus we hold that our moral alphabet and vocabulary are true, because according to them, the laws which have universally prevailed among mankind have a moral meaning. Our Duties, I have said (*Elem.* 279), give significance,—a moral significance,—to our Obligations: and we must have such Duties as shall give meaning to our legal Obligations. Our moral system must be such that the Obligations between men, acknowledged as binding by the law of all societies, shall correspond to Duties of the affections by which such men are bound according to their social relation.

Instead of saying that our Duties *give* significance to our Obligations, I might have said that our Duties *find* significance in our Obligations. Perhaps this would have been the more exact phrase, and you may adopt it, if you think that it better expresses the sense I have been explaining. I think the phrase I have used is more commonly employed in such cases. We speak familiarly of an alphabet which *gives* meaning to an inscription: yet we might, no doubt, speak of the alphabet being one which *finds* meaning in the inscription. The sense would be the same; and as I have said, in the case with which we are concerned, I have no

objection to any one preferring the latter expression. Certainly the moral meaning existed in the Laws before Moral Systems gave it. Moral Systems discern and arrange; they do not make the results of man's Moral nature, either in Laws or anywhere else. And I shall be quite content to say that we must have such Duties as find a moral significance in our Obligations.

But turn for a moment to another objection. I think you will understand that when I say we *must have* such Duties, I mean that we must have them in our Moral System; not that the reason I have assigned is the ground of the affections which such Duties regulate. The reason which I give is not the reason why we *have* such Affections, but why we recognize them as Duties. The Affections may be natural; but their being natural does not make them Duties. Filial Affection is natural; so is Revenge: but we call the former a Duty; we deny this name to the latter, in our system. Why do we do so? For this, among other reasons; that the Laws of all those countries where Law has made any progress, enjoin certain Obligations, certain mutual services between Parent and Child:—guidance and support, obedience and submission. We believe that these Laws are indications of man's true moral tendencies;—utterances of his moral faculty; and therefore we believe in and admit, as a part of our Moral System, a Duty which goes beyond the Law. When Law only says *obey*, Morality says *honour* thy father and thy mother. Do we thus make the Law the foundation of filial obedience and respect? Surely no person giving a reasonable degree of attention to what has been said, would be likely to make such an assertion. But the Law and the Duty are both results of man's moral nature, and we read in the one a summons to acknowledge the other: we read in it, not an explanation of Filial

Obedience as a physiological fact, but a commendation of Filial Obedience as a right habit of heart and mind.

But the habits of the heart and mind may be regarded also in other ways; and may in other ways, also, be proved to be right. Acts of obedience, respect, honour, love, like all other acts, may be elements in our moral education; and we ought to perform acts of this kind, which may tend to forward such an education. And in this consideration, we may find additional reasons for approving of some affections and disapproving of others, although both classes be alike natural. We approve of a man's love to his father; we condemn a feeling of revenge entertained towards his brother. Why do we do this? Revenge is as natural to man as the love of the members of his family. Yes: but we are not to content ourselves with our natural feelings. We are to cultivate and mould them so that they may tend to conform to Moral Conditions. We are to bring our affections into harmony with Benevolence and Justice. We are to seek, in the circumstances of our social position, the means of carrying on this purpose;—of constantly fostering what favours, of repressing what thwarts it. And we can easily discover some ways in which affection does thus tend to a coincidence with virtue. Love grows by loving. By bestowing its affection, the heart becomes affectionate. It is softened by a contact with the nearest objects. To love our brethren, is a step towards loving all mankind as brethren; a step which helps us to the next. We see then that family love, besides the recommendation of being natural, which taken simply, is not a moral recommendation, has the recommendation of being capable of forming a part of a moral progress which leads us towards that universal love to which Morality points as one of her cardinal objects. To love well the members of our especial family, is a good

way of learning to love all the members of the great human family.

In saying this, again, do I offer this universal benevolence as a consideration which is to lead us to the love of the members of our family ;—of father or of brother ? Plainly not. As I said before, it is not the reason why we love, but it is one of the reasons why we know our love to be a Duty,—a Virtue. The love of child to parent, of brother to brother, springs up in the heart spontaneously. We do not plant it. But we do cherish it. And we do so, because we know, from such considerations as I have stated, that it has a moral value. Vindictive feelings spring up in the child's bosom spontaneously. But we do not cherish them. We repress the thought of vengeance between brother and brother, between man and man. Why ? Because these tend to Violence, Malice, Wrath ; the opposites of Benevolence. But you tell me that Revenge is a wild Justice : that its being natural shows that it has a rightful office in man's nature. I reply ;—Take the Justice, and leave the Wildness. Resentful affections, I grant you, *have* a rightful office in man's nature. That office is, to give energy to the love of Justice. This is done, when such affections are no longer personal, but simply moral : when our swelling heart no longer impels us to the revenge of our own injury, but to the redress of all wrong : when resentment for offenses is absorbed in indignation against all injustice. This is the office of the angry affections ; and in this direction, they are to be permitted and confirmed. Yet even in this direction, with caution ; and ever with care that they do not overgrow the kindly affections ;—that the fire of Zeal do not scorch up the dews of Love.

I do not think you will see, in this attempt to determine which of our natural Affections may be recognized as being also Duties, and which may not, any extravagant

asceticism, or unnatural coldness. This is, I think, a mode in which moralists have very commonly argued, and had their arguments assented to. "If a man do not love his brother, how shall he love a stranger whom he never saw?" This question does not sound very strange or novel. "Beware of nourishing resentment, for you are very likely to be a partial judge in your own case." This is not an unheard-of and preposterous warning. My fear might rather be, that a Morality which renders such reasons for its rules and arrangements, might be accused of being common-place ; but, as I have already told you, that is an accusation which I am not at all careful to avoid ; for it must often seem applicable to that kind of system of Morals which I should deem the best.

There is indeed another objection which might be made to a system of morals, such as I have described, which seems to include in its doctrines the common moral judgments of mankind. It might be said : You profess to frame a Moral System by reasonings from self-evident principles ; and yet you bring, as supports to it, judgments of Legislators and Jurists and Moralists of all ages, and of mankind in general. You promised an independent Morality, and you give us a Morality dependent upon the general agreement of mankind. You described your doctrine beforehand as if it were to be scientific and demonstrative, and it turns out to be a mere assemblage of popular opinions and national customs. You spoke of your Morality as aiming at the rigorous form and clear evidence of Geometry, and it is, after all, only a collection of practical Rules of Mensuration, which are indeed current in different countries, but which may be right or may be wrong. What would be thought, the objector might ask, of a Geometer who should begin his treatise on his subject by telling us that "it is

*generally allowed* that an equilateral triangle is also equiangular;" or that "we know, on the authority of Pythagoras, that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the two sides?" And is it not much the same procedure to begin to establish Moral propositions by referring to the universal customs of nations, or the authority of Roman and English jurists or moralists? Such an objection might, I think, naturally be alleged against our scheme, on the ground of the part which positive Law holds in the exposition of it. It might seem that though, as I have endeavoured to show, not based upon Law, it still adopts so much of actual Law and Custom and common Opinion, that it must in some measure be affected by the variableness and vagueness of those materials; and must fall far below its pretensions to exact reasoning.

To the objection thus urged we reply, that we take the opinions which we thus include among our doctrines, not as authorities, but as examples of moral doctrines. We look with a moral interest at the structure of the laws, the administration of justice, the expressions of moral judgments in all ages and countries, not considering these as necessarily, or as universally, entitled to our deference; but as specimens of the results of man's moral nature by comparing and weighing which, we, also having within us our share in the moral nature of man, are led to the perception of moral truth.

We do not accept with equal regard the laws of barbarous and civilized, of savage and of humane countries. We deem ourselves capable of judging what laws are barbarous and savage, what are wise and good; what contain a trace of the ferine nature, what lead to the truly human standard. We do not accept, as guides in our Morality, the laws and customs of countries where men devour their parents, or have their wives in common, or punish their

citizens with death or exile for the crime of being rich or wise or just. We can see that such laws do not point the way to Morality. We perceive that they are not pure results of our moral nature; and that we are not to frame our moral scheme so as to include such decrees. But laws which are the laws of long-enduring, tranquil, prosperous States, composed of thoughtful men;—States advancing continually in social comforts, art, culture, humanity;—these laws, or rather the principles which are involved in all such codes of law, and which we see to be necessarily involved in them;—these we do accept and adopt, as fundamental principles of Universal Morality. Will it be said that there is an arbitrary assumption, in thus making a difference between some nations and others, as savage and civilized;—in presuming that we are able to say when nations advance in culture and humanity? Undoubtedly there is an assumption in this, but not an arbitrary one. There is the assumption that there is, and that we can perceive, a difference between men and brutes; and that we can perceive when man in his social changes departs further from the condition of the brute, and approaches more nearly to the true condition of man. Brutes feel appetite, desire, affection, as well as man does; but brutes do not conceive Rules,—understand the abstract and general terms in which Rules are expressed;—discern the Ideas involved in such terms, in virtue of which we can connect Rule with Rule and Law with Principle; and as we find that men, in their social arrangement, have done this, we deem them to have acted truly *as men*, and we take them for our guides; or rather, we look upon them as men who went a little way, in a path in which it is our aim to go much further.

When we formerly spoke of taking certain fundamental Principles of Morality as self-evident, we spoke also of an

objection which might be made to this procedure, namely ;— that our supposed self-evident Principles would not be self-evident to all men ; would not be seen and granted to be true if we took a promiscuous jury to pronounce upon them. And we replied, that a promiscuous jury, taken, for instance, from savages, or from rude, or prejudiced, or thoughtless men, were not competent judges of Truth in this case, or in any case. *Vox populi vox Dei*, or *Vox populi vox veritatis*, must be held with some limitation. *Vox populi feri* is not *vox veritatis*. It would be more suitable to say, *Vox humani generis vox veritatis*. I cannot consent to refer the truth of moral principles to a jury of cannibals or kidnappers, voluptuaries or swindlers ; but if you have a desire that we should follow this course of referring the matter to a jury, let us see if we cannot agree upon a jury who may be fit to try the cause. Where then shall we look for such jurors ? Who are likely to be properly gifted and to be deferred to in what they pronounce ? Who more likely, than the great lawgivers of peaceful nations ?—men speaking in the name of their fellow-men, with the impression, we must suppose, of a weighty responsibility, as acting on the part of the nation, for the present and future generations ;—seeking to secure to their citizens peace and the enjoyment of worldly goods at least, perhaps also aiming at higher objects, the social, moral, and intellectual culture, of their nation ;—these, indeed, may be supposed worthy to form a jury who shall pronounce whether our fundamental moral principles are true and evident. And many too who come after these ; judges, whose passions and prejudices naturally die away in the fine air of an elevated judicial position ;—jurists, seeking in their closets the principles of right judicial decision ;—moralists, tracing such principles still further into the nature of men ;—of such men indeed, if you collect a jury, we may listen with some respect

to their sentence, as to what are universal principles of morality :—listening, even to them, with no slavish submission, as if they could make that to be true and right which in itself was not so ;—but listening, in the confidence that their sentence would be true and right, and would correspond to the best and purest whisperings of the moral nature within us. Surely if you wish to refer the matter to a jury, you will be content with such a jury as this. They are men, as well as the first twelve you might take at Temple Bar, or at Timbuctoo : they are not promiscuous men indeed ; that is, not men promiscuously mixed of brute and man ; but true men ; or, at least, men who have laboured and toiled, under favourable circumstances, to be true to their humanity. Do you then agree to go before such a jury ?—Let it be so—But it is to such a jury as this, that I have all along been appealing. I have been referring the matter to legislators and judges and jurists ; and I have been endeavouring, as well as I can, to extract from them a verdict, on the points in question. It seems to me that they pronounce on my side ;—that they decide such fundamental Principles as mine to be true and universal Principles of Morality. But if any one thinks that their decision is otherwise, let him point out those sayings of theirs which he so interprets. Let him show us when he finds them contradicting either the truth, or the evidence, of these principles. If he cannot do this, surely I may presume that I have established my case, and that the jury to which we have agreed to refer have pronounced in favour of the principles on which our Morality is built.

But you will perhaps, say that, after all, this is not the way to get at self-evident principles :—that we are to see what is self-evident, not with the eyes of other people, but with our own :—that in Geometry, for instance, we do not take our axioms on the authority of the ancient Greeks, but

see them to be true for ourselves:—that we do not extract them from Rules of Mensuration, but contemplate them in their native simplicity of form. That thus, our mode of obtaining our first principles shews that they are not self-evident.

To this I reply, that I require, in Morality as in Geometry,—(I hope I may without offense follow out the analogy which has been urged against me—) I require that we should know our First Principles to be self-evident by seeing them to be so:—that I call in jurists, not to see self-evident Principles for us, but to fix our attention upon First Principles, that thus we steadily looking at them may see whether they are to us evident or not. I say, further, that this is the procedure which Geometry followed in its formation:—that though we do not take our axioms on the authority of the ancient Greek mathematicians, we take those which they have stated and we have assented to; some of them being far less immediately self-evident, than others which they have passed by: and this we do, because we can, by that means, build up, from our principles, systems of Truth, like those which they have transmitted to us, and taught us to admire, by the skill with which they have performed the like task. I say, moreover, that Geometry,—speculative Geometry,—*was* extracted from practical Land-Measuring. History informs us that this was so:—that the Geometry of the Greeks arose out of the Land-Measuring of the Egyptians. And this is of itself most likely; for in every subject, Practice comes historically before Theory; Art before Science. Man acts first by the guidance of his practical Reason, and afterwards unfolds his convictions before the eye of his speculative Reason; thus striving to discern the Truths on which his action depends, and the Ideas which it involves. He constructs Squares and Pyramids and Ellipses, directed by his practical Geometrical Faculty; and then, by the aid of

the same Faculty in a speculative form, he discovers the properties of Squares and Pyramids and Ellipses, and finds out demonstrations of these properties, and resolves these demonstrations into their simplest shapes, till he makes them depend upon Axioms, which all are ready to acknowledge after a little reflection, but which no one saw the true place of before. These Axioms are assented to by all thoughtful persons ; and to say that they are assented to by all who have steadily considered them, is one of the simplest ways of saying that they are self-evident. And in like manner,—if, as I have said, I may without offense illustrate a part of the possible progress of Morality by a reference to the progress of Geometry ;—in like manner Morality begins with Practice ; with Laws and Rules. It is an Art before it is a Science. It guides people in ordering and governing families and tribes and nations, before they construct ethical systems, and seek to analyze such systems into their elements. But this time, too, comes ; the season comes for systems and principles, theories and analysis. Men had, by the help of their Practical Moral Faculty, constructed Codes and Tribunals, States and Constitutions ; they now, by the aid of this Moral Faculty in a speculative application, try to discover the principles of Codes of Law, and Constitutions of States. They have already established Rights and Obligations ; they have discerned that there are Duties and Moral Rules ; they have approved men's Virtues and condemned their Vices : but they now wish to see what is the exact relation between Obligation and Duty ; between Duty and Virtue ; what is the most clear and coherent arrangement of Obligations ; what of Duties ; upon what Principles, what fundamental and comprehensive Truths, this coherence must depend ;—Truths, implied in what they had before done ; but still, needing to be brought into light that they may see what they are doing. And thus, they are led from jural

Rules to Moral Precepts; from Moral Precepts to Moral Principles; and from Principles to Principles, until they arrive at some on which they can build up a System of Morality.

If those Principles which I have stated can be made to answer this purpose, of affording a foundation for a coherent System, I hope what I have now said will satisfy you that in the mode by which I have been led to them, there is nothing contrary to the analogy of the most successful provinces of speculation in which the human mind has ever employed itself.

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## LECTURE VI.

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### VIRTUE. HAPPINESS. CONSCIENCE. THE WILL OF GOD.

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I HOPE that the lectures already delivered here have made it unnecessary to explain further the manner in which, according to our system, we are led to establish our moral Rules. We find that the recognition of a difference of right and wrong, which is the first step in Morality, implies a Supreme Rule of Human Action. We find that, in order that such a Rule may have validity, certain of its results must be vested in persons as Rights. These may be considered as fragmentary and external portions of the Supreme Rule; and from these, knowing that they *are* fragmentary and external, and possessing within ourselves the Faculty or Faculties of which these fragmentary Rules are the expressions, we are able to ascend to the complete and interior Rule, the general scheme of Morality. We found that this Rule might be constructed by the convergence of five elements, Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity, Order. These may be taken as our Cardinal Virtues, which, modified by external conditions, and by combination with each other, produce the other virtues; and which, manifested in act, appear as Duties.

In this mode of proceeding, we assume, or rather, we find the nature of man's mind to be such, that he must recognize a Supreme Rule of Action; and we assume too, or find, that external jural Laws are indications of internal moral Rules. These views of man may be called views of man's *constitution*; and the System of Morality so estab-

lished may be said to be founded upon the constitution of man.

It is perhaps sufficiently evident from the first, that the notion of actions *absolutely* right and wrong implies a Supreme Rule of Action; as the notion of actions *relatively* right and wrong implies subordinate Rules of action. That course of action is relatively right, which leads to its object; as to labour, is the right way to grow rich. That course of action is absolutely right, which is right without mentioning the object; as when we say, "it is right to be honest." If we might use a geometrical illustration, we might say that *rightness* in the one case is *direction*, in the other, *straightness*. A southward direction is the *right* way to London; but a straight line is the *right* way wherever we go. And as Geometry begins her reasonings by asserting the necessary properties of a straight line, so our Morality begins *her* reasonings by considering the necessary conditions of right action. And thus, we are led to Moral Rules which may be considered as derived from the nature of right action itself;—to a Morality growing out of an internal principle.

But Rules may also be expressed otherwise, namely, by the *object* to which they tend. All subordinate Rules are governed by their object: thus the Rule to labour is determined by its object, to grow rich. But is there any object which can properly be assigned to the Supreme Rule? Or are we unable, because it is the Supreme Rule, to describe it as having any object? as a straight line in general does not tend to any particular point. Our Supreme Rule of action is; *Be benevolent, just, true, pure, and orderly*: but what object are we to attain by being this? I have already said that if we are asked, why we should do what is right, it is a sufficient answer to say, because it is right: for rightness contains its own reason, as straight-

ness contains its own proof. But if any one ask to what object does right action tend, can we give no answer? Is there nothing in the circuit of men's desires or thoughts, no abstract or general notion, which can be mentioned as the object of right action?

It is not at all *necessary* for us, in our System, to discover or describe such an object. We have constructed our Rules without any reference to such an object. We have constructed them by considering that there must *be* Rules, with some other conditions. And therefore it is not requisite for the completeness of our System, nor for its application to special cases, that we should describe the Supreme Rule of human action, and, included in it, all other Rules, as having some *object*, external to the Rule, from which object it derives its direction and efficacy. That mode of expression is not necessary for the completeness of our System; but nevertheless it may be admissible, and even eligible, on other grounds. And if admissible, it may be eligible, perhaps, on this ground:—if such a mode of expression be very usual in the common language of men, and in the writings of a great many Moralists. For, as I have said, it is the aim of our Morality to express the Moral Truths which are universally acknowledged among men, in the most simple and familiar terms in which they are commonly expressed: only excluding from our language all ambiguity, laxity, and false assumption. If, then, there be, commonly current, any particular mode of expressing Moral Truths and Moral Rules, even if this be not necessarily a part of our scheme, we may still give it a place in our exposition; only taking care to show that it is not an essential element, and pointing out the bearing of this mode of expression upon those forms of expression which the System necessarily requires. Such an adoption and systematic interpretation of common language respecting

human actions and reasons of action, is, indeed, very desirable: for though a System of Morality may be complete without it, a Treatise of Morality could hardly be so. A book professing to be a Treatise on Morality could hardly be complete, if it excluded as insignificant or inadmissible a number of the most familiar and current modes of expressing Moral Propositions. As Moralists, it is our business to understand and explain such expressions. We may refuse to adopt them as the only, or as the best modes of expressing such Propositions. We may even deny their propriety, and may perceive that they involve false assumptions or erroneous analyses of human nature. But still, we must notice and examine them;—must point out their errors, or explain the relation of the popular to the systematic form of expressing the Truth. This, I say, it belongs to us, as Moralists, to do, in general: and this, in particular, if there be any popular mode of expression, or any one employed by special schools of writers on morals, in which mode of expression all Rules of human action, and the Supreme Rule especially, are spoken of as governed by and directed to an object.

Now there *are* such modes of expression. Certain schools of moralists use, and consider it very important to use, expressions of this kind; and expressions more or less resembling those of these schools, form a part of the popular language on moral subjects. What are these expressions? What is the universal object of human action? Why, according to these schools, are men to be benevolent, to be just, to be true, to be pure? What do such teachers assign as a reason for acting rightly, for which we require no reason? What is asserted by them to be the object of Virtue? What is it that is accepted, even by men following the common course of thought and language, as a

sufficient reason for our actions, as a solid ground for our Duties?

You will probably have already answered these questions in your own minds.—*Happiness*. Even according to common apprehension, it is a sufficient reason for us to act thus and thus, that we shall so promote our real and final Happiness; it is a sufficient ground for Virtue, that it is the basis of all human Happiness. And Moralists have arisen among ourselves who have made such expressions the key-notes of their system;—who have deduced all the Rules of human action from this one principle, that the pursuit of happiness is the universal and necessary spring of action;—who have represented Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity and Order as *means*, directed towards Happiness as an end.

Shall we reject those popular modes of expression as false, because they are not necessary parts of our system? Shall we deny all the propositions asserted by other schools, because they are obtained by a process different from that which we follow? By no means:—I have already said, we must pursue a very different course from this. We must try to show, not that such propositions are false, but in what sense, with what explanation and expansion of the meaning of their terms, they are true. We must not contradict them, if they say the same things, or nearly the same things, in different language from ours; we must rather attempt to show how nearly they are the same things, and how their language is to be translated into ours. Happiness is, as I have said, their key-note: and if, in this key, the strains of their moral doctrine sound to our ears, harsh and somewhat out of tune; still if the music really be good, let us consider whether it may not be transposed into a sweeter and more harmonious key!

Happiness is to them all in all: what then must Happiness be, in order that they may so speak of it, without essential error?

It seems to me that this attempt to find meaning and truth in other expressions and other Systems besides our own, is not unreasonable or unprofitable; and this attempt, therefore, I have made. I have asked, as I have just said, what *Happiness* must mean, in order that it may properly be said to be the object of all actions, and of all Rules of action, even of the Supreme Rule. This I have asked; and *this* is the answer I am led to give:—Since, all Rules of action having their corresponding objects, the Supreme Rule also has its object, this object must be the Supreme Object of human action. Happiness, then, which is the Object of the Supreme Rule, must be the Supreme Object of human action. And if in our notion of Happiness whatever also we include, we include this also, that it is sought as the *Supreme* Object of action, the expressions which I have noticed, that Duty and Virtue are means to Happiness as an end, though not such expressions as we should have chosen, are admissible; for, inasmuch as Duty and Virtue are conformable to the Supreme Rule, they must be means to the Supreme Object.

Happiness then is the Supreme or ultimate object of human action, including all other objects. And this I think falls in very exactly with the common notion of happiness. Men in general will assent to what we say, if we tell them that “To be happy includes or supersedes all other gratifications. If we are happy we do not miss that which we have not: if we are not happy, we want something more, whatever we have. The Desire of Happiness is the Supreme Desire. All other Desires, of Pleasure, Wealth, Power, Fame, are included in this and are subordinate to it. We may make other objects our ultimate objects, but

we can do so only by identifying them with this. Happiness is our being's end and aim\*." These expressions are merely echos of the most usual and familiar language current among men.

Bearing this in mind, we can speak of Happiness, of the pursuit of Happiness, and of Moral Rules being the way to Happiness, in the same language which is used by the Moralists of common life, and even by the Moralists of those schools which make this word their badge. But because we thus willingly avoid useless wrangling about different modes of expressing the same truths, do we therefore accept the special doctrines, or follow the characteristic courses, of those schools? Surely not. The distinction is, surely, plain enough for any body to see, between assenting to their conclusions, and adopting their principles and reasonings. Men may come to right conclusions, setting out from the most absurd and extravagant assumptions; especially in a subject in which they have an inward practical conviction of what is right and true, acting as a natural guide, and correcting the vagaries of their artificial system. I believe this to be the case with almost all Moralists, in treating of their subject. There are not many Moral Teachers whose ultimate general results are not in a great measure agreeable to true Morality. We see that, however various and distant be the principles from which they set out, their paths gradually converge, and ultimately approach each other. That they agree in their final doctrines, is no proof at all that they are closely connected in their initial assumptions.

In our System, we allow that Happiness is the ultimate end of human action;—the supreme point to which all Rules tend;—the object of Virtue. But we make no use of this declaration. It does not enter at all into the reasoning by which our Rules are established. In my

\* *Elements of Morality*, (544).

published Treatise, in which I have, I believe, put propositions in the order in which they are coherently deduced from each other, the consideration of Happiness does not enter, until Duties and Virtues have been fully discussed and disposed of. It comes at the end of all that relates to Morality in its most definite sense; and comes then, for the very purpose which I have now been explaining;—the purpose of illustrating the relation of our System to Systems which we do *not* follow. The word is discussed and explained, along with other terms, also describing objects of human action; as *Pleasure, Interest, Utility, Expedience*; and this discussion is accompanied by a statement of the difference between our System, and those which have these objects for their guiding points. And as the whole of our Scheme of Morality had been established in the preceding part of the book, and would have been as complete without this chapter as with it, it can be no fault of ours, if any one make such a confusion as to find, in the little which is said about Happiness, the basis of our whole System, and the evidence of its identity with those Systems which we reject.

But you will perhaps ask, Why do we reject the System which makes Happiness the basis of Morality? Accepting the conclusion, why do we reject the premises? If Happiness *be* the supreme object of human action, why should not men, why should not *we*, build our systems upon this truth, as their fundamental principle? What need of any other system, if the fundamental principle of this be true?

To this I reply, that the reason why I do not erect my Moral System upon the principle, that Happiness is the supreme object of human action, is, simply, that I *cannot*. I cannot, from that principle, obtain definite Rules of action, by any proofs which appear to me at all satis-

factory or intelligible. If I were to try to construct a System of Morality upon this principle, I must necessarily begin, in the first place, by such a definition, or measure, or analysis of Happiness, the object of action, as should lead me to determinate rules of action; and I can discover no such definition, measure, or analysis as shall put this in my power. I have no objection to any one else trying to do this;—trying to make a definition and analysis of Happiness such as shall, by just reasoning, lead to a coherent body of moral rules. I suppose every one must allow that this is the proper course of proceeding, in order to frame a system on this basis;—that if our Morality is all to be extracted out of the principle that Happiness is the supreme object of human action, the leading term in this fundamental truth must be defined, or its meaning ascertained, in some secure way. And indeed the Moralists who have proceeded upon this principle, appear, by their mode of procedure, to have generally acknowledged the reasonableness of this expectation. They have usually begun by professing to give some account of what Happiness is, when they had to treat it as the proper guide of human life. But I am compelled to say that I do not find, in the results of their labours, anything which satisfies me that this course can be productive of any solid moral truth. We have, as I conceive, a most remarkable instance of failure in one of the most illustrious of the Moralists who have gone in this track;—an acute and able writer, if ever there was one;—our own Paley. He makes the pursuit of Happiness the basis of his system. He has, at the outset of his book, a chapter on Human Happiness, which seems to hold out a promise of telling us what, in his opinion, Happiness is. His account of it seems to me very incomplete. I think that a man might be very unhappy, although in the possession of all the elements of Happiness which Paley enumerates. I

think he would be so, for instance, if along with all these, he were labouring under remorse for some secret crime. But let that pass. How does Paley perform the next step? Having got his definition or analysis of Happiness, how does he use it? How does he make it answer the purpose of his undertaking? This question seems very natural. The reply to it seems to me very remarkable. Paley makes no use whatever of his own account of Happiness. He never once refers to it again. He talks about Happiness, indeed, very soon after. The word occupies a prominent place in the next chapter. But it does not there derive its influence on his reasonings in any degree from the explanation he had just given of it. On the contrary: the use of it, in this chapter, is irreconcilable with the explanation he had given. He says, now, "Virtue is the doing good to mankind for the sake of everlasting Happiness." Here, his own previous exposition of the meaning of the word must go for nothing: for everlasting Happiness cannot consist in the prudent constitution of the habits, health, and tranquil nerves. Here, *our* account of Happiness would very well agree with his view: for of everlasting Happiness, we confidently say that it is, and ever should be, the supreme object of action, and therefore the guide of Virtue. But I think I speak with no unreasonable severity of criticism,—as I certainly speak with the most cordial reverence for the abilities of the writer, and the many striking merits of his work,—when I say that there is in such reasoning, or rather, such absence of reasoning, as this, nothing to lead us to think that a coherent System of Morality can be deduced from the principle that Happiness is the supreme object of human action. At any rate, as I have said, I cannot frame such a System, and therefore I have taken an opposite course. The term *Happiness* appears to me to be so entirely relative to our desires and affections, that it cannot regulate them. Men pursue

happiness as boys pursue the rainbow. But woe to him who makes the rainbow his guide! It is where he looks, and it flies as he pursues. Its place is governed by his own, and therefore cannot help to fix his position or direct his course. Our procedure, on the other hand, may, I think, be represented by the image of the process by which men determine the place of the magnetic pole. They observe the direction in which the needle points in various countries; they consider to what point all these directions converge; and though the place be distant and unseen, they can still make their calculations by their knowledge of this point of convergence, and so guide themselves aright on the surface of the earth.

And thus, comparing our system with those which are in any way based upon Happiness, we say\* that "*They* seek to deduce the Rules of Action from a Supreme Object of Desire, whereas *we* have deduced them from a Supreme Rule of Action," determined, not by the objects of Desire, but by the conditions of a Rule. "They direct men to aim at Happiness, we direct them to aim at Acting Rightly:" and though we assent to them when they say that Rightness points to Happiness, we do not use this proposition in establishing our Rules.

Other Systems which determine Moral Rules by some general object, are still more evidently incomplete. For instance, if any one professes to deduce a system from the *Utility* of actions as the test of their being morally right, we ask, Utility for *what*? To be useful, an action must be useful for some purpose. What is the general object to which the utility of actions is referred? whatever this object be, *that*, and not Utility, is the Supreme Object in the system, and ought to be so stated.

\* *Elements of Morality*, (552).

All systems which establish Moral Rules by their tendency to some external object ;—Happiness, Utility, Pleasure, Interest, or whatever else ; may be called *Dependent Systems*, in contradistinction to those which deduce Moral Rules from the constitution of man, not, indeed, overlooking the objects of human desires, but not governing themselves by these ;—such Systems may be termed Systems of *Independent Morality* ; and you will perceive, from what I have said, that the System which I have laid before you, aspires to to be one of these.

The controversy between these two classes of Systems has gone on through ages, and has been one of the principal points of interest in the history of moral philosophy. Upon former occasions I have, in my lectures, traced the history of moral philosophy, in this point of view. Other writers also, in modern times, have divided moral philosophers into two opposite schools, and have traced the progress of each. In doing this, some, I think, have spoken of these two opposite schools as the *Utilitarian* and the *Sentimental*. The latter term, I cannot help thinking peculiarly inappropriate and indeed offensive. The word has, in modern times, been so generally used to a self-indulgent display of unregulated emotion, that we can no longer confine its meaning to the etymological sense. We are not allowed, by the common usage of English writers, to employ, in serious writing, a word in the sense which its derivation would give it, when it has already been appropriated to a different meaning. We are not allowed to call a man a *physician*, because he studies physics, or a *methodist*, because he treats of methods ; and, for the same reason, we ought not to call a school of moralists *sentimental*, because they refer to an internal sentiment as the leading point in morality. But even if the word were not thus improper, it is utterly inappropriate to describe that school to which it is applied. Why should

Butler be called a *sentimental* moralist? Inasmuch as he professedly makes morality depend on the constitution of our nature, you might call him a *constitutional* moralist; but such a term, however descriptive, would not serve us in a division of schools. And what are we to say of the assertors of Immutable Morality, Cudworth and Clarke, and the like? Certainly, they are not of the utilitarian school, but with just as little propriety can they be reckoned as members of a "sentimental" school. Or if we turn to the ancient Moralists, Plato for instance, with what intelligible use of words, can we place him either in the utilitarian or the sentimental school?

The distinction which I have stated, that of the Independent and the Dependent School of Morality, is easily traced in the ancient, as well as the modern world. In Plato's Dialogues, the question is repeatedly discussed, whether the Rule of Action for man be the pursuit of pleasure and gain, or the internal harmony of his nature. You will, many of you, recollect the lively and dramatic dialogue at the beginning of "The Republic," in which the former of these opinions is asserted by one of the interlocutors, and the acute and decisive Socratic refutation which it encounters. You will recollect, too, that the doctrine of Independent Morality is announced in the most distinct terms at the close of the fourth book, as the result of the previous discussion. "Virtue, then, as we are thus led to see, is a health and beauty and wellbeing of the soul. Vice is a disease, and foulness, and infirmity." And when the original question is, at this point of the argument, again asked:—Whether it is better to be just or to be unjust, even if the injustice is to remain unknown by all and to meet with no punishment;—the person to whom the argument is addressed, and who is, by this time, brought to a conviction of the truth of the doctrine which it is the object of the

dialogue to inculcate, says, "Nay, Socrates, this question is now ridiculously superfluous." And in the ninth book, the discussion being really concluded, the speakers, playfully mimicking the practice of pronouncing, by the voice of a public crier, a solemn judgment upon the merit of a theatrical spectacle, agree to proclaim;—"The son of Aristo gives his judgment that the most virtuous and just is also the most happy, and the wicked and unjust the most unhappy;" and further, "that this is so, even if their deeds are hidden from all, men and gods."

I think there can be no question in applying to such doctrines as these, the term *Independent Morality*. Nor is there any difficulty in finding examples of schools of Dependent Morality among the ancient writers on Morals. All those who declare Pleasure to be the end of Human Action, as Epicurus and his followers, belong to this class: and they have had a numerous tribe of successors in modern times; who have however differed very widely in their doctrines, according to their various measures and analyses of pleasure.

But, it may be asked, in this division of Schools of Morality as Dependent and Independent, in which class are we to place the ancient Moralists whose writings have, perhaps, had the greatest influence of all? To which side do Aristotle's Treatises on Moral Subjects belong?

At first sight, it might appear as if he were to be classed with the assertors of Dependent Morality: for he begins his Treatise on Ethics with Happiness;—*εὐδαιμονία*—and appears to intend to make the whole of his System depend upon his explanation of what Happiness is, and his analysis of it into its elements. And this does appear to me to be his intention: and this, in a great measure, he appears to have done. Do I then place him among the teachers of Dependent Morality? I do not; and for this reason:—He analyzes Happiness, as the first step of his discussion of

Morality, but this step forthwith throws him back upon the constitution of man, the peculiar ground of the opposite school. What is Happiness, he asks? It is not pleasure, nor honour, nor wealth, nor inactive virtue. Happiness, the Supreme Good of man, the necessary object of action, is, if we consider it carefully, found to be the active exercise of the soul in the way of virtue—*τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ' ἀρετὴν*. And thus, in order to determine what modes of action tend to this ultimate and supreme good, he has to consider what the active powers of the soul are; how they are related to each other; what are commonly called Virtues, and how these can be classified and arranged, limited and defined, so that they may form a coherent system. I think any one who carefully examines the Nicomachean Ethics, will see that a large portion of it is employed in discussing the import of the various terms which composed the moral vocabulary of the Greeks; and in pointing out how the application of those terms was to be regulated and bounded, in order that they might express true propositions in a consistent manner. That in the greater part of cases in which moral propositions come before us, we can, without the application of any peculiar principle, discern which are true and which are false, is, throughout, taken for granted. Aristotle's occupation, in the Ethics, is therefore in a great measure the same as that which in the outset of these lectures (Lect. ii.) I ascribed as a necessary part of *our* task;—namely, so to define and determine the significance of common moral terms, by means of their natural relation and connection, that they may express familiar moral truths, but in a more precise and steady manner than is commonly practised;—so that they shall convey the popular convictions, but without the vulgar laxity and vagueness. Take the fifth book of the Nicomachean Ethics, for instance, in which Aristotle discusses the various senses in

which *Justice* and cognate terms are used ; and the conditions which are implied in such usage. And I may mention, merely for the purpose of illustrating what I have said, of the agreement of our method to a certain extent with that of Aristotle, that in my published treatise on Morality, also, there is a chapter on Justice (the twenty-first Chapter of the Third Book), in which the same course is followed ; and that this Chapter on Justice is followed by one upon Equity ; as Aristotle's discussion of *Δικαιοσύνη* is followed by a similar discussion of *Ἐπιεικεία*.

I place Aristotle, then, among the teachers of Independent Morality ; although he has not asserted the doctrine so strongly as Plato has done ; and although he begins by speaking of Happiness. For, as I have already said, the difference of the two schools of Morality is not whether they do or do not speak of Happiness ; nor whether they do or do not allow happiness to be the supreme object of human action ; but whether they do or do not establish their Moral Rules by their reference to some object considered as distinct from the human faculties themselves ; be it called Pleasure, or Happiness, or Utility, or by whatever other name.

I may observe, too, that Aristotle, at the end of his *Ethics*, turns to the subject of the views which have been taken by other writers ; and warns us of the dangerous consequences of rejecting too vehemently other ways than our own of expressing moral doctrines. He suggests that in a certain sense, and with a certain enlarged understanding of the phrase, we need not deny that Pleasure is a Good ;—that those Moralists who make it their business to decry pleasure, run a chance of being disregarded, as unmeaning or hypocritical talkers ; since all are moved by pleasure. But to follow this sound and reasonable advice, is quite a different thing from establishing our System of Morality upon the

foundation that Pleasure is not only a good, but is the chief and only good. And accordingly, this account of Pleasure and Happiness comes in the last Book of the Ethics, after the whole of the author's system has been expounded : as in like manner, and under like circumstances, I have inserted in my published work, at the end of the part concerning Morality, a chapter respecting Pleasure, Interest, Happiness, Utility, and Expedience ; all of which are, by different persons, asserted to be the supreme ends of human action.

Turning now, for a moment, from the greatest philosophers of the ancient world, to the moral writers of modern times ; those with whom we here are at present most familiar are Butler and Paley. Of these, Butler evidently belongs to the school of Independent Morality. He asserts that man has, among his active Principles or Springs of Action, a constitution, according to which some of those Principles have a natural authority over others ;—Prudence over Appetite, for instance, and Conscience over Desire. His teaching agrees entirely with what I have said (*Elem. Moral.* 67) of Reason being our necessary guide ; and (56) of the moral sentiments of Approbation and Disapprobation which are universally conjoined with our judgment of actions as right and wrong ; and (359—364) of Conscience as the law of our nature. Butler's writings have been of the greatest value in preserving and restoring among us true views of Morality : but there are some expressions used by him, which, if not duly limited, may lead his followers into mistakes. Thus, he sometimes speaks, not only of the *Authority*, but of the *Supremacy* of Conscience. Now if by calling Conscience *supreme*, it were meant that the Principle so described is something possessing sovereign and original authority over man's other springs of action, this Principle would necessarily be the proper ground of Rules of action ;

and all such Rules must be derived ultimately from this Principle. We should then, in order to frame Rules of Morality, or to decide any moral question, have to enquire how we can learn the decisions of Conscience on such subjects. Conscience is our guide ; where are we to learn what she says ? Conscience, the Law on the Heart, is supreme over all Laws ; how are we to read this Law ? Conscience is the test of right and wrong ; but *whose* Conscience ? for Conscience belongs to a person. As these questions cannot be answered in any satisfactory manner, so long as we ascribe to Conscience an original authority and separate existence among our Principles of Action, it has been found easy for the opponents of Independent Morality to embarrass and silence, and, as seems to me, to confute those who gave this representation of Butler's ethical views. The opponents have constantly said, " You tell us that Conscience is the proper guide of action ; but whose Conscience ? ours, or yours ? Our Consciences point different ways ;—can both be right ? And if not both, how are we to know which ? "

These are familiar and popular arguments ; but they appear to me to be decisive against all who ascribe to Conscience a *Supremacy*, in the proper sense of the term ;—namely, a sovereign and ultimate authority over all other Principles of action, so that when a decision is pronounced by Conscience, there is no further reason to be rendered for it, nor any higher decision to be sought. From those who take this view of Conscience, as an authority distinct, permanent, and ultimate, I think the opponents have a right to demand to have a clear and definite code of Moral Rules exhibited to them as the dictates of Conscience ; and to be allowed to disprove the pretensions of this code, and thus to overthrow the theory of Independent Morality in this form. If Butler asserted the doctrine of Independent Morality in this sense, I think that we cannot maintain his

doctrine; nor work out, into a complete system, the specimens of his method of moral reasoning which he has given us, and which are very far from forming a System of Morality. But I think it is very plain that this was not Butler's view;—that he did not thus hold an original and independent Faculty of Conscience, whose decisions would form a permanent body of Moral Rules. I think that, with him, Conscience was not a body of truths, but a process by which Truth is to be obtained;—a Faculty, if you choose, but a Faculty which must be trained and exercised in order to be used;—which may be improved, instructed, and enlightened;—which may be blinded and perverted in individual men. Conscience is a Faculty of man, as Reason is a Faculty;—a Power by exercising which he may come to discern Truths, not a Repository of Truths already collected in a visible shape. Conscience, indeed, is the Reason, employed about questions of right and wrong, and accompanied with the sentiments of Approbation and Condemnation which, by the nature of man, cling inextricably to his apprehension of right and wrong. This is the view that we have been led to take of Conscience. This is, as I conceive, Butler's view also. That by Conscience, he does not mean any special independent Faculty, distinct from the Reason with its accompanying moral sentiments, is, I think, evident from the whole current of his language. He does not confine himself to the single term *Conscience*, in his account of the superior principle of our nature: on the contrary, he perpetually uses, for this term or with it, other terms, which give the same view of it which we have taken. He calls it "Reflection or Conscience, an Approbation of some principles or actions, and a Disapprobation of others;"—and again, "Reflex Approbation or Disapprobation:" all the phrases which he employs manifestly point at a Principle or Faculty, not by which we necessarily *have*, but by which we

may *get*, a true knowledge of the course which we ought to take under any given circumstances. We are, to use another of his phrases, "to act suitably to our whole nature, and especially to the higher and better part of our nature;" the constitution of human nature being such that there is in it a higher and better part. This higher and better part tells us that injustice is worse than pain; but it does not tell us what acts are unjust, except through the process of reflection. The notion of injustice is necessarily the object of disapprobation to the Conscience; but to unfold this notion of injustice into detail, so as to see what special acts are included in it,—this is the office of the Reflection, that is, of the Reason. We, in our system, have tried to see and to show by what operations of the Reason we may arrive at this special application of the general conceptions of injustice; and I conceive that if Butler had gone on to construct a System of Morality upon his own principles, he must have proceeded in something of the same manner. For instance, in his ninth Sermon, he makes it his object to prove that Revenge is unlawful, that is, immoral, and Forgiveness of Injuries, a Duty. But in order to do this, he does not refer to Conscience as a supreme internal guide, which directly tells us that this is so. And indeed with good grounds does he abstain from doing this; for the voice within, which seems at first to tell us that Revenge is a Duty, and Forgiveness a Weakness, is so loud and imperious, that it requires some care, some reflex habit and comprehensive thought, to distinguish that lower but better voice, which is really the teacher of Duty. We must employ our reason, in such a case, to instruct our Conscience; and this is what Butler does. He bids us to recollect "That mankind is a community, that we all stand in a relation to each other, that there is a public end and interest of society, which each

particular is obliged to promote ;” and that “resentment must never be indulged or gratified for itself, by any one who considers mankind as a community or family, and himself as a member of it\*.”

Again ; as another mode of establishing the Duty of Forgiveness, he traces the general consequences which would follow if no such Duty were recognized. “Put the case then that the law of retaliation was universally received, and allowed as an innocent rule of life by all ; and the observance of it thought by many (and then it would soon come to be thought by all) a point of honour : this supposes every man in private cases to pass sentence in his own cause ; and likewise that anger or resentment is to be the judge. Thus from the numberless partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when he was not : and in most cases would represent an injury as much greater than it really is ; the imagined dignity of the person offended would scarce ever fail to magnify the offense. And if bare retaliation, or returning just the mischief received always begets resentment in the person upon whom we retaliate, what would that excess do ? Add to this that he likewise has his partialities—there is no going on to represent this scene of rage and madness : it is manifest there would be no bounds nor any end.”

Another mode of reasoning which Butler employs in order to determine our Duty with regard to this feeling of Resentment is to consider the end for which this feeling was implanted in us ; namely, as a prevention or remedy

\* This, I may remark, is a ground on which I also have placed the Duties of Benevolence (*Elem. Moral.* 291), among which I might have enumerated Forgiveness of Injuries, as a Duty included in the Morality of Reason ; although I have more distinctly spoken of it (599) in speaking of that Christian Morality by which this Duty is more emphatically enjoined.

to irregularity and disorder\*: which he says, “plainly shews it ought never to be made use of but only in order to produce some greater good.”

And thus, according to Butler, the mode of learning our Duties is not by referring directly and at once to any repository of them which we call Conscience, but by employing our Reason in the best manner we can, to discern the nature of man and the intention of God. That which we thus learn, is the dictate of Conscience. This is Conscience,—the Law written on the Heart. The Law is written there, but to read the writing is a matter, often at least, requiring a careful and continued study. And this being so, Conscience is no permanent body of Rules or ultimate Tribunal. Conscience, as I have said (*Elem. Moral.* 361), is the stage at which we have arrived in the Moral Culture of our minds: and cannot therefore be referred to as an Ultimate and Supreme Authority (368). I do not here dwell upon these points; for I have given this view of them more fully in the published work; in which also I have distinguished Conscience in the sense here spoken of, the Law of the Heart, from Conscience, the Witness of our own actions, and Conscience, the Accuser of our own crimes. By Conscience in these latter senses, that Law of the Heart really finds its application to the special cases which our own conduct supplies.

The Ethical Works of Butler, though valuable as a philosophical defense of Independent Morality, contain, as I have said, nothing but small and imperfect fragments of a System of Morality; and could not, I think, be made with any profit, the principal work on Morals in our university

\* I have also employed this consideration. Thus (*Elem. Moral.* 666), “That man was intended by God, or by Providence, to follow this or that course, if the intention be allowed, is universally accepted as proving it *right* that he should follow such course.”

studies. This place has of late been occupied by Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*; a work of the opposite school. Paley's work has the merits of great clearness and simplicity, and an idiomatic vivacity of manner which fastens its sentences upon the mind with an irresistible charm. But even if we were indifferent to the question between independent and dependent Morality, we ought not, I think, to be indifferent to the gross violation of connection and logic which is to be found in the beginning of the work, as I have already stated in speaking of his definition and use of the term *Happiness*.

Probably Paley's book obtained for the Rules of a moderate and equitable Morality more assent than, at that time, in that generation, any work constructed upon principles more really moral would have received. But at present I think there exists very generally, and especially among ourselves, a feeling of repugnance to the Principles on which Paley's system is constructed. I have in several places in my published work (530, 531, 555) attempted to shew that Paley's mode of expressing and reasoning about Moral Truths is not satisfactory; and I will not here pursue the subject.

I must notice one other view of the subject of Morality. I have spoken of the different ways in which the Rules of human action may be presented; namely, as the results of a Supreme Rule, or as modes of seeking a Supreme Object. But there is another way in which such Rules may be presented, and which it is important to notice, for a similar reason to that already alleged;—namely, because, though this mode of presenting Moral Rules does not exhibit the course of reasoning by which we have been led to them, it is nevertheless a truth of the deepest and most comprehensive kind, and one to which men's minds naturally and continually turn.

Our Moral Rules, our conceptions and convictions of Duty, are arrived at by the exercise of a Faculty or Faculties of our minds, which we have described as a combination of that Reason by which we *see* what is right, with that sentiment by which we *approve* of what is right. And whether or not this account of the Moral Faculties by which we are led to moral Rules be accepted; at any rate we are, in our mode of proceeding, led to moral Rules by such Faculties as we have. But, besides the subordination of means to ends, and of Rules to objects, by which we are led to a Supreme Rule, we are also necessarily led to regard all existing things and objects of thought in the light of effects and causes, and of a successive series of effects and causes. And this continued subordination of effects to causes, which causes are themselves the effects of other causes, leads us to the recognition of a Supreme Cause;—the Cause of all things that are, and of their being what they are. Our thoughts are thus led to God, the Supreme Cause of all; and, as included in this all, of man and his Faculties, whatever those are. God, the Supreme Cause to which our contemplations are irresistibly directed, is not merely a physical cause of natural things; but a cause, also, of man's personal being, of his social relations; of the powers by which he reflects upon his social relations; of the convictions he thus acquires; of the rules of action to which he is thus led; of his classification of actions as right and wrong; and of the moral sentiments which accompany this distinction of actions. He is not only the cause of man's physical, but of his moral nature, and of its being what it is. He is the Supreme Cause of Personality and Will in man; and is himself the Supreme Seat of Personality and Will. The Supreme Rule, thus regarded as an existing object of thought, is an effect of the Supreme Cause;—is an act of the Supreme Cause;—or, in other words, is the Will of God. The Supreme Rule, being the

act of the Supreme Cause, is identical with the Will of God. The Supreme Rule, considered as an object in a world of Effects and Causes produced by the Supreme Cause, is itself derived from the Supreme Cause;—is thus derived from the Will of God. But we have, in natural Morality, no means of learning the Will of God except that process of reason by which we are led to the Supreme Rule; and hence, *for us*, the Supreme Rule is not derived from the Will of God, but is identical with it. The Will of God is the *cause* of the Supreme Rule in the process of divine creation; but the Supreme Rule *is* the Will of God in the process of human reasoning. Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity, Wisdom, in some degree or other, are possible attributes of man, because God has made man what he is; but Benevolence, Justice, Truth, Purity, Wisdom, in the highest degree, are necessary attributes of God, because they are the Supreme Rule of action, according to such conditions of action as we can alone conceive. We can say that God is benevolent, just, true, pure, wise, because it is by directing our thoughts in the direction in which these qualities point, that we fix our thoughts upon God.

To the expression, that Moral Rules depend upon the Will of God, it has been objected, that this makes Moral Rules arbitrary, and the Moral Attributes of the Deity unmeaning, since on this supposition, they merely express the identity of this Will with itself. But these objections do not touch us. For though we say that, as a work of creation, Moral Rules originate in the Will of God, the origin of all things; we say, too, that, as a process of manifestation, the Will of God is known by having Moral Rules. We know what is the Will of God, by knowing what is right. And when we apply to God the terms which describe moral qualities, we do so, in order to form,

or to approach to, however imperfectly we may be able to do this, some Idea of the Will and Personality which we must conceive to be conjoined with that Supreme and Central Causality of which the whole world, moral as well as natural, persons as well as things, is the effect.

I would avoid as much as possible the introduction of that great and awful name and Idea of the First and Supreme Cause of all things into discussions of a controversial character. But I have hoped that I might be allowed to refer to it so far as I have now done, in order to remove objections which might occur to men's minds, on seeing the Supreme Rule of Action presented as a result of the Supreme Cause; and thus, as it might appear, no longer Supreme. From what has been said, it will appear that it is Supreme in the series of rules and reasons, of means and ends; but not Supreme in the series of Effects and Causes.

But there is still another remark which it is important to make on this subject. The Supreme Rule of Human Action, as we have seen, must necessarily point to the Supreme object of human desire; namely, Happiness. Happiness must be the consequence of Right Action, or Virtue. But the Happiness of man, as well as his Moral Faculties, is the result of his being that which the Supreme Cause has made him; and the coincidence of Happiness and Virtue, if it exist, must exist in virtue of that Will which is combined with the Supreme Cause;—in virtue of the Will of God. And when we act with reference, in our thoughts, to the Supreme Object, Happiness, and with reference also, in our thoughts, to the Supreme Cause, we shall necessarily look upon these as connected and coincident;—shall look upon the Supreme Object as to be attained in ways appointed by the Supreme Cause;—shall look upon Happiness as to be sought

by conforming to the Will of God. But this, though a different mode of expression from that which we have commonly employed, is not at all at variance with the other. For the Will of God, being known to us by our power of discovering Moral Rules for human actions, we then conform to the Will of God, when we do what, by the best exertions of our Faculties, we see to be right. And to seek Happiness by acting rightly, which, as we have seen, is what Morality teaches us to do, is to seek Happiness by conforming ourselves to the Will of God.

And thus, we have three Supreme points, which, existing in different regions, coincide in direction, and lead men to express moral truths in different, yet consistent ways. We have a Supreme Rule, a Supreme Object, and a Supreme Will:—we must act rightly; we must seek our happiness; we must conform to the Will of God:—we have the regions of Duty, Felicity, and Deity. We may express the rules of action in ways derived from any of these three regions. We may say that we must do what is right; or what will make us truly happy; or what God commands. All these Rules coincide. They all express the same result. What we, following our method, have to say of the three regions, is this:—that the first is the only one in which we can find the means of establishing definite Rules. We grant you that that is right action which leads to Happiness: but we do not know anything of Happiness exact and profound and comprehensive enough, to enable us to deduce, from this principle, rules of right action. We agree with you that we must obey the commands of God, and conform ourselves to his Will: but we cannot discern what are his commands, or what is his Will, except by considering what is right,—what is our Duty. Hence, we have begun by exploring this region of Rightness or Duty. We have

thus obtained Rules of human action, both general and particular. We know that these Rules, thus determined in the region of Duty, point also to those other objects ;—to the perfection of human Felicity :—to the favour of the Deity. We think that our method is the best. It is the independent method of proof, establishing moral Rules by the condition of their being moral Rules. But at any rate, it is satisfactory to us ; while other methods which have been proposed are not. And men mistake us altogether, if they think it any objection to our mode of proof, that in its results, even in its most general results, it agrees with the results of other modes of obtaining moral Rules, and that we assent to the general propositions in which this coincidence is asserted.

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## LECTURE VII.

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### INTERNATIONAL LAW.

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I HAVE endeavoured to explain, in the last three Lectures, the mode in which, as I conceive, we naturally construct the Supreme Rule of Human Action, including all the Rules of Morality discoverable by the Reason; and also, to explain some degree of confusion, and to remove some difficulties, to which the first exposition of the method here followed may have given rise. I have attempted to show that, in this method, we do not make Morality depend upon Laws, except in the sense in which all mankind necessarily make Morality depend upon Laws;—that in requiring that all external things shall be desired as means to moral ends, we are not propounding any ascetic rule, but expressing a necessary condition of man's moral progress;—that we may properly say that our Duties give significance to our Obligations, or find significance in them;—that the reasons which the Moralist gives for virtuous Affections, are not the reasons why man *has* such affections, but the reasons why they are reckoned *virtuous*;—that by our method, we do not make Morality depend merely upon the authority or custom of preceding ages; but that we do refer to the agreement of Moralists and Jurists as the best external evidence which Principles of Morality can have. We have further seen that in our System, we can readily agree in their result with those who say that Duty is the road to Happiness; but that we do not agree in method with those who deduce our Duties from this principle, because

we cannot find any independent measure or analysis of Happiness, which enables us to do so;—that moreover we agree with those who say that the Supreme Rule of Human Actions is the Will of God; but that this does not make our Morality cease to be independent; since the Will of God is identical with the Supreme Rule, and is known to us, so far as mere Reason is concerned, only by our knowing the Supreme Rule of Human Action.

These are the principal difficulties which, so far as I know, are likely to occur to the minds of those to whom this system is presented; and having, as appears to me, sufficiently noticed these, I shall not now pursue the subject of Morality into detail in particular points. I have already stated what is the general course which our discussions take when we thus apply our method to special questions of Morality. We endeavour to fix the meaning of the leading terms which enter into such discussions;—terms necessarily general and abstract, and often, in the common usage of mankind, loose and vague. We attempt to state the fundamental principles, the axioms or postulates, if any one chooses so to call them, which are assumed and referred to in such discussions. For instance, in order to determine the meaning of *Justice*, in its applications to particular questions, we are led to lay down these two principles, as both universally assented to by those who use the term (*Elem.* 481, 484);—that *Rights cannot be founded on Injustice*; and that *Rights are regulated by existing conditions*. And in like manner, other terms of prominent value in moral discussions are taken into consideration, and the fundamental principles which they imply are examined with a view to this application.

Among the general and abstract terms which it thus becomes proper to examine, there is one in particular, which is the means of extending the Rules of Morality into a new field, larger and more splendid than the sphere of private

life, or even of a citizen's political activity: I mean the term *State*, used to designate a Nation or Community regarded as one agent; acting, of course, in the manner which belongs to its political constitution. For the State, in this sense, is a Moral Agent, since it may act rightly or wrongly: and it is a Moral Agent, not only with regard to its own citizens, to whom it neglects its Duty if it do not attempt to make its Laws just, and the administration of them pure and effectual; but it is also a Moral Agent, with regard to other Moral Agents of the same kind, namely, other States. State is bound to State by the ties of Obligation and Duty, as man is to man. States have their Rights, which other States are under an Obligation to respect. States have their Duties, which being performed often include an acknowledgement of the Moral Claims of other States.

But we have here two sets of phrases which, in speaking of the morality of individuals, we very pointedly distinguished; Obligations and Duties on one side; Rights and Moral Claims on the other. Obligations and Rights, which are jural conceptions,—conceptions which the Law enforces and realizes: Duty, which is a moral conception,—a conception which is realized by the Conscience, and the hope of Happiness here and hereafter. Do both these sets of conceptions apply to this new class of moral agents,—to those collective agents which we call *States*?

At first sight, it might appear as if neither of these two sets of conceptions could be applied to States;—not the former, the jural conceptions of Rights and Obligations between States; for there is no superior authority which makes and enforces Laws for transactions between States, as a State makes and enforces Laws for transactions between its citizens;—nor again, can the latter, the moral conception of Duty, be applied to States in their transactions with each other; for *Conscience* and *Hopes of Happiness*, are

conceptions which appear hardly to be applicable to States. And thus, the moral agency of States appears to elude our grasp, for want of the conditions which give to moral agency its reality. What is the solution of this difficulty?

The solution is this :—that there *is*, for States, a common Law, a body of International Law, which, though not made and enforced by any Superior Authority, is, to a certain extent, made and enforced by their common consent; and though the import and application of International Law is very far from complete, in consequence of the imperfect degree of this common assent, yet there is a constant tendency operating to make this consent more perfect; this tendency resulting from the assumption that the Law is identical with Justice, and that it is to be determined in each case by determining what is just: for this being assumed, those who act on the part of States, are constantly labouring to complete the Law where it is incomplete; and, so far as they are moral men, to act upon it and to cause others to act upon it. And thus, though for States there is no positive Law, and consequently, it might seem to follow, no Morality, (for where there are no Rights there can be no Obligations,) yet there is something which is compounded of both, and takes the place of both. There is an International Law which, though not made and enforced by any superior authority, is Law because it is Justice. There is a Justice for States, which requires them to respect each other's Rights, though these are defined, not by rigorous and authoritative Rules, but by Rules often obscure and wavering, often violated with impunity.

The general Code of Law, which is Law because it is just, and in which the positive Rules made by particular States are admitted, not as necessary principles, but as definitions of terms, is called *Jus*: and the Laws which are to be referred to by the Moralist in considering the inter-

course of nations being of this kind, we may more properly describe this Code as *International Jus* than as *International Law*.

There has been a good deal of confusion in the use of the terms which describe *International Jus* or *International Law*. These two phrases are of recent origin, and appear to be free from ambiguity: but instead of them, the term commonly used in English has been *The Law of Nations*: and this again has often been supposed to be a phrase of the same import as the Latin phrase *Jus Gentium*. I have, in the *Morality*, explained the distinctions between *Jus Naturæ*, *Jus Gentium*, and *Jus Feciale*, according to the Roman Jurists.

“1139. *International Law* is sometimes called *The Law of Nations*: meaning, by this phrase, the *Law between Nations*. But this phrase may create confusion, from its resemblance to the phrase *Jus Gentium*, which is used by the Roman Lawyers, to denote, not *International Law*, but *Positive or Instituted Law*, so far as it is common to all Nations. When the Romans spoke of *International Law*, they termed it *Jus Feciale*, the *Law of Heralds*, or *International Envoys*.

“1140. The *Jus Gentium*, the *Instituted Law* common to all Nations, is sometimes put in opposition to *Jus Naturæ*, the *Law of Nature*, a *Law* which it was conceived might be deduced from necessary principles. Thus Grotius\* asserts that *jure naturæ*, subjects are not bound by, nor responsible for, the acts of the Sovereign, but that *jure gentium*, they are.”

A distinguished modern writer has said† that the Romans called their *Jus Feciale* also *Jus Gentium*; but I think it will be found that this confusion, if it ever was made, appears only in modern writers.

And yet, undoubtedly, there is a very natural connection

\* *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, III. 2. 1.

† Wheaton. *Hist. des Progrès du Droit des Gens*, p. 7.

between *Jus Gentium* in the ancient sense, the agreement of the Laws of all Nations, and *the Law of Nations* in the modern sense, the Laws between Nations. For what could be a better foundation, or more authoritative guide, for the transactions of States with each other, when they came to recognize each other as having mutual Obligations and Duties, than the Rules or Principles by which they had already been led to regulate the transactions between fellow-citizens? The Laws of States in general were necessary developments of the conception of Justice, which is natural to man; or as we prefer to say, necessary definitions of the terms in which Rules of Justice must be expressed: the *Jus Gentium* was a necessary development of the *Jus Naturæ*. And in like manner International Jus, the Law of Nations, was a series of definitions of the conception of Justice applied to States; *Jus inter Gentes*, also was a necessary development of *Jus Naturæ*. And, accordingly, a usual title of works on this subject has been *The Law of Nature and Nations*, or some similar phrase; in which it was acknowledged that International Law has for its basis those Laws of Justice which are a result of man's nature. What the real meaning is of the distinctions usual in Jurists between *Jura Naturæ* and *Jura Gentium*, I have attempted to explain in my published work (1140—1142).

A circumstance which tended still further to connect *Jus Gentium* in the Roman sense with International Jus, was that the two subjects were cultivated by the same persons, the Jurists, whose education and leading studies had lain in the Roman Law. Indeed we may venture to say that a large part of International Law grew out of the Roman Law. For the Roman Law was the Law of the whole civilized world, after the establishment of the empire, and was studied by a great body of lawyers in every country; and was by them accepted and represented as the genuine

dictates of natural justice. When therefore the empire was again divided into separate states, it was natural that in all transactions between states the jurists should be referred to; and should decide the matters in question by the application of the principles and maxims of the Roman Law. It was an immense step towards a Code of International Law, really consistent and just, to have, already formed and current, a body of fundamental maxims, and a fixed technical phraseology, in which they could be applied and discussed. And it has, I think, continued to be true up to the present time that, with regard to a large portion of International Law, those persons have reasoned most clearly and conclusively who have been *Jurists* in the usual sense, and have made the study of the Roman *Jus* the basis of their scheme of International *Jus*.

This may be said more particularly of certain parts of International Law; especially those parts which refer to international Rights of Property and Treaty. There are other parts of International Law which appear to have another origin. I refer particularly to the Rights of War, which appear to have come more distinctly into view at an early period among the Greek States; as it was natural that the recognition of Rights between States under all circumstances, in War as well as in Peace, should arise among a great multitude of neighbouring States, having a common language and common civilization, and connected by many ties of blood and friendship, so that they could not look upon each other as out of the sphere of mutual rights. Accordingly, we find early traces of Rights of War in the usages respecting the burial of the dead, the erection of trophies, and the like. Aristotle is said to have written a work entitled *Δικαίωματα πολέμων*, *The Laws of War*; but it seems doubtful whether, in the passage which records this, we ought not here to read *Δικαίωματα πόλεων*, *The Law of Cities*. In Polybius, how-

ever, we have a very clear and detailed reference to the Laws of War. In his fifth Book, speaking of Philip the Third of Macedon, and his War with the Ætolians, in which he not only took as spoil goods and arms, but also destroyed the temples, he blames him at considerable length, adding (cap. xi.), "For the Laws and Rights of War (οἱ τοῦ πολέμου νόμοι καὶ τὰ τούτου δίκαια) allow you to destroy the enemies' forts, harbours, cities, men, ships, produce; but not to do what brings no advantage to you, and does not weaken them in their operations of the war; as to destroy temples and statues. These are the acts of a savage temper and a savage habit."

But though we find in history and in literature these and many other indications of a Code of International Law relative to the Rights and Obligations, both of Peace and of War; the work which first gave this part of Morality its due aspect in the eyes of men, and which even now may be considered as the most important book which has appeared in the history of the subject, is the work of Grotius *De Jure Belli et Pacis*. This is indeed a treatise on Morality and Legislation, as well as on the Law of Nations; but the latter is the peculiar and characteristic part of the work, to which the other portions must be considered as subsidiary. Hence it happens that the author mixes up, in one common, or at least continuous discussion, the actions of individuals towards each other (Morality), of states towards their own citizens (Polity), and of states towards each other (International Jus). But this mixture does not deprive the separate elements of their value; and the great and good qualities of the author, a full and ripe scholar, an accomplished jurist, a virtuous and wise man, have given their character to his book. It was received with admiration and respect when it first appeared; was rapidly and widely read; and has been constantly referred to as authority ever since. Soon after its publication,

professorships were founded for the cultivation of the branch of Morality thus brought into distinct existence. As Alexander of Macedon always kept the volume of Homer under his pillow during his wars; so Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, in his campaigns, had the *De Jure Belli et Pacis* for his companion. It has been repeatedly published with commentaries of various writers, and must still be considered as a necessary introduction to all other works on International Law, and a very important book in the history of Morals.

Grotius's work is full of quotations from ancient authors, especially of historical passages, adduced to illustrate and confirm his decisions on each of the questions which he discusses. This has been objected to by various persons. It has been said (by Dr. Paley referring to Grotius\*) that if these are taken as ornaments, the composition is overloaded with them; and if as proofs, they are frivolous and inappropriate. But to this we may reply as Mackintosh does, especially so far as the work is considered as a book of International Jus. The answer, he says, might be given in the words of Grotius himself†. "He was not of such a stupid and servile cast of mind, as to quote the opinions of poets or orators, of historians and philosophers, as those of judges, from whose decision there was no appeal. He

\* *Moral. and Polit. Phil.* Preface.

† Mackint. *Law of Nations*, p. 16. Grot. Prol. § 40: "Usus sum etiam ad juris hujus probationem testimoniis philosophorum, historicorum, poetarum, postremo, et oratorum: non quod illis indiscrete credendum sit; solent enim sectæ, argumento, causæ servire: sed quod ubi multi diversis temporibus ac locis idem pro certo affirmant, id ad causam universalem referri debeat: quæ in nostris quæstionibus alia esse non potest, quam aut recta illatio ex naturæ principiis procedens, aut communis aliquis consensus. Illa jus naturæ indicat, hic jus gentium: quorum discrimen non quidem ex ipsis testimoniis, (passim enim scriptores voces *juris naturæ* et *gentium* permiscunt) sed ex materiæ qualitate intelligendum est. Quod enim ex certis principiis certa argumentatione deduci non potest, et tamen ubique observatum apparet, sequitur ut ex voluntate libera ortum habeat."

quotes them, as he tells us himself, as witnesses whose conspiring testimony, mightily strengthened and confirmed by their discordance on almost every other subject, is a conclusive proof of the unanimity of the whole human race on the great rules of duty and the fundamental principles of morals. On such matters, poets and orators are the most unexceptionable of all witnesses; for they address themselves to the general feelings and sympathies of mankind; they are neither warped by system, nor perverted by sophistry; they can attain none of their objects, they can neither please nor persuade, if they dwell on moral sentiments not in unison with those of their readers. No system of moral philosophy can surely disregard the general feelings of human nature and the according judgment of all ages and nations. But where are these feelings and that judgment recorded and preserved? In those very writings which Grotius is gravely blamed for having quoted. The usages and laws of nations, the events of history, the opinions of philosophers, the sentiments of orators and poets, as well as the observation of common life, are, in truth, the materials out of which the science of morality is formed; and those who neglect them are justly chargeable with a vain attempt to philosophize without regard to fact and experience, the sole foundation of all true philosophy."

Yet we might make an objection, somewhat of this kind, to the work of Grotius, if it were now put forwards as a complete treatise on International Law. We might object, not that he alleges so many authorities, but that all his authorities are ancient; not that he refers to so many passages of history, but that he confines himself to Greek and Roman history. More modern writers (as Zouch, Bynkershoek, Martens, Wheaton, Manning, and others) have, with great propriety, referred principally to the treaties, state papers, and other historical documents of states in

modern times; in order to shew what principles of justice and equity are recognized in the modern Law of nations, and in what sense. If Grotius had done this with reference to the times immediately preceding his own, his book would have been of more use to the international jurist at an advanced period of his studies.

But we may remark that the work would thus have been less fitted for the reading of the young student, who may be supposed to be acquainted with ancient, but hardly familiar with modern history in its official details: and we may add, in further explanation of Grotius's procedure on this subject, that his readers, the literary Europe of that day, may be conceived to have been, in this respect, in the condition of the young students of our own time. Modern history had hardly yet taken its place by the side of ancient. There were no speeches or statements in recent historians, which could be compared with those in Thucydides, Polybius, and Livy; nor any utterance of the moral sentiments of the modern European world, which could be quoted as equally general and authoritative with the expressions of the classical poets and moralists of antiquity.

There is another objection which has been made to Grotius, which I have noticed in the *Morality* (1147). He has been blamed for the harshness of some of his doctrines; for instance, for saying that to enslave vanquished, and to kill captive enemies, is not contrary to the Natural Rights of War. And my reply there given is to this effect;—that if Grotius had asserted these practices to be contrary to Natural Rights, he would have judged rude nations by a standard which they neither acknowledge nor know; that the proper condemnation of such practices is, that they are the Rights of war in a rude and savage condition of nations; and that it is the Moralists's business to recommend a far higher standard of Natural Rights. This Grotius does, in

the most emphatic manner; and any one who reads his work will see how gladly and energetically he makes his transition from these savage forms of the Rights of War, to Rules mitigated and tempered by a higher Morality. After stating the severer practice, the earlier *Jus Belli*, he introduces a series of *Temperamenta Juris*; and introduces them by saying \*, “I must now tread back the path in which I have advanced. I must take from belligerents the Rights which I may have seemed to give them, but which I have not really given them. For, as I said formerly, we are often said to have a Right to do this or that, because we may do it with impunity.” But this is different from doing it rightly, as he proceeds to explain; and in doing this, he brings his Laws of War towards the more humane Rules of modern Warfare.

It is not my purpose to offer to you any continuous view of the literature of this subject; but I cannot help remarking how inferior to Grotius, in my opinion, is another writer who may be looked upon as, in some respects, his successor, and whose name is often associated with his. I mean Puffendorf, who was placed in the Professorial Chair of this subject, the Law of Nature and Nations, which was founded at Heidelberg by the Elector Palatine; in which office he gave lectures, using Grotius's work as his text-book. Puffendorf's book *On the Law of Nature and Nations* professes to be more complete and demonstrative than that of his predecessor; but I think it will be found, that the

\* Lib. III. c. x. § 1. “Legenda mihi retro vestigia, et eripienda bellum gerentibus pene omnia, quæ largitus videri possum, nec tamen largitus sum. Nam, cum primum hanc juris gentium partem explicare sum aggressus, testatus sum, *juris esse aut licere* multa dici, eo quod impune fiant, partim etiam quod judicia coactiva suam illis auctoritatem accommodent, quæ tamen aut exorbitent a recti regula, sive illa in jure stricte dicto, sive in aliarum virtutum præcepto posita est, aut certe omittantur sanctius et cum majori apud bonos laude.”

juristical language and tone of Grotius's book give it a precision and coherence which his successor has missed ; and Grotius is throughout directed by a truly moral habit of mind, which Puffendorf seems to have lost in the confusion of warring arguments. He begins his work, with great pomp of metaphysics, by speaking of "moral entities," as the things which govern human life. Of these entities, some are States : "a State is a moral entity framed and taken up on account of the analogy it bears to space." Other entities are Persons ;—"moral entities framed with analogy to substance ;"—others are Modes, &c. . . . But all this apparatus is turned to no use. Puffendorf's conclusions, for the most part, rest upon loose and popular views ; and very often appear to be suggested by a desire to differ from his master. Another element which appears to operate upon and to disturb his speculations, is the influence of Hobbes's views ; which had then been recently published, and had produced a great effect upon men's minds. Puffendorf professes indeed to reject Hobbes's assumption of the state of nature, as a state of natural war of every man against every man : but his reasonings are, I think, evidently influenced by the hypothesis of such a state ; and he is constantly contrasting the state of nature and the civil state ; as if the former, opposed to the latter, admitted of a positive conception. He makes indeed the social nature of man the foundation of the Law of Nature, as Grotius had done (ii. 3. 15). "This then will appear a fundamental Law of Nature : Every man ought as far as in him lies to promote and preserve a peaceful sociableness with others." But this principle, in such a form, is too vague to lead to definite results. In Grotius it is interpreted by the *Jus Gentium*, the accordant Laws and Customs of all Nations. This additional aid Puffendorf rejects, not allowing it to be, what Grotius represents it, the evidence of a common moral

nature. Puffendorf says: "The reason why such institutions are common to many nations does not arise from any mutual covenant or obligation, but is wholly to be attributed to the particular *pleasure* of the several legislators who *by accident* agreed in these several ordinances, without the least regard to one another." And thus Puffendorf, looking at these two so-called Laws, the Law of Nature and the Civil Law; accepts the former, which cannot lead to any definite results without the addition of Definitions, and rejects the latter, which is, as we have said, the body of Definitions necessary to give a form to Natural Law. Hence it generally comes to pass that his decisions have no reasons to support them; they are each of them given as a sort of guess, with the expression "I think" so and so; or else, reasons are given which prove a great deal more than he ventures to assert. Leibnitz appears to me to have well characterized Puffendorf, whom he calls *Vir parum jurisconsultus et minime philosophus*.

By way of an example of the loose reasoning by which Puffendorf is led to immoral results, I may mention his opinion that, between nations at war, there is no obligation to observe compacts, except those compacts which tend to peace—that a Truce, for instance, is contrary to nature, and may be broken without blame (VIII. 7. 2). For, he says, "a State of War, as such, has no other measure of action than force. When I enter into Articles of Treaty, it is implied that I desire the person I treat with should believe me and rely upon my faith. But now it is a sort of contradiction to require of him such a dependence upon me, and at the same to profess that I resolve to continue his enemy: that is, to do him all the mischief I can." All this reasoning is at once rendered inapplicable, when we adopt the Conception of War as a definite jural condition, in which both parties have Rights and Obligations, modified,

but not extinguished, by that "*contentio publica, armata, justa*," in which they profess to be engaged.

So far, you perceive, Morality, the Doctrine of Obligations and Rights between Nations, was mixed up with the Doctrine of Duties between individuals. There was no clear separation of International Law from Morality in general. Such a separation was, however, requisite, in order that the subject might be treated with due precision. The merit of this step is ascribed to Wolf, once a great name in German philosophy and jurisprudence. It is ascribed to him by his disciple Vattel, through whom his labours in this department are now principally known, and whose work is still commonly referred to as the most convenient manual of this part of knowledge. This separation tended to make more evident what I have already stated, that International Jus is neither Morality simply, nor Law simply, but something partaking of the nature of the two. It also tended to give a distinct form and fixed body to that collection of customs, maxims, and principles, which are acknowledged by Christian nations as valid in their mutual transactions and negotiations.

In the course of the progress of the subject, we find new technical rules coming into prominent notice, in war as well as in peace. Thus, for example, definitions and rules were established concerning *Contraband of War*, and concerning *Blockade*. Contraband of War denotes all instruments of war; and implies the rule that, in time of war, a belligerent power does not allow a neutral to carry such goods to its enemy. Blockade denotes the condition of a place besieged and closely invested; and implies the rule that the besieger does not allow a neutral party to carry any goods whatever into the place besieged.

These rules have been further fixed and determined in more recent times; and the limitation or extension of them

has been the subject of much discussion. I mention these now the more particularly, with a view to correct an expression used in my *Morality* (1161), which may lead the reader to a confusion of the two terms. I have said that "when a place is *blockaded*, neutral persons have no longer a Right to carry thither *Munitions of War*;" but I ought to have said, that neutrals have not a Right to carry Munitions of War to belligerents at any place, blockaded or not; and that when a place is blockaded, neutrals have not a Right to carry thither any goods, either contraband of war or other. And the *Right of Search* which is, in that paragraph, mentioned in connection with the state of blockade, is a Right claimed by belligerent nations as a necessary means of carrying into effect the Right of confiscating both Contraband of War and enemies' goods. The confusion arose from the attempt to compress this part of my subject as much as could be done. I am the more desirous of noticing the oversight, because, in this subject of International Law, those of you who consult my published work may have less opportunity of correcting its impressions by your knowledge of other books, than you may have in other and more familiar departments of Morality.

Cases belonging to such questions as I have just referred to,—the confiscation of contraband of war, the measures justified by breach of blockade, the carrying of enemies' goods by neutrals in time of war, the capture of enemies' vessels, and the like, have often been matters of actual contest, which it was necessary to bring to some judicial decision. Courts have been established, possessing a jurisdiction on such subjects, which have been termed *Courts of Prize*, *Courts of Admiralty*, *Courts of Maritime Law*; and the decisions of such Courts have been recognized as valid by other nations, as well as that nation to which the Judges belonged: and in this manner, there really has been

established a positive Code of International Law for Civilized States.

And this has been the case with regard to other Rights, as well as the Rights of War. The Rights of Jurisdiction of a State over its subjects may easily give rise to questions which require such a Code; for when a citizen of one State passes into the territory of another, he carries with him some consequences of legal acts performed in his own State; (as contract, marriage, and the like;) and yet his legal condition must be in some measure determined by the laws of the State in which he is. And among the maxims which have been established, in order to regulate such matters, is this;—that the Laws of a State which refer to legal transactions happening within its territory are allowed by other States to have an extraterritorial efficacy, so far as they do not interfere with the rights of those other States. This maxim is ascribed to the *Comity* of Nations;—a willingness to oblige each other, by granting, as a matter of favour and mutual understanding, that which is not a matter of Right. And in this manner the Conflict of Laws between different States is amicably settled.

The recognition of this Comity of Nations between independent States has, as I have said, gone a considerable way towards establishing, in reference to this subject, a body of positive Law which is acknowledged by all civilized nations. But yet the compulsory force of such Law must be imperfect; since there is no authority, sovereign over independent nations, by which the sentence of the Law can be carried into effect with regard to a refractory State or its citizens; or by which a conflict between the decisions of the Courts of different countries on such subjects can be adjudicated. And these defects have no doubt impeded the progress of International Law towards completeness. But in the continent of North America, we have a body

of States, which, though they have Codes of Law in many respects different, acknowledge a common jurisdiction, that of the Federal Union. In this case, the question of the Conflict of Laws assumes a distinctness and a reality which in Europe it does not possess: and in that country, therefore, we may expect that the subject will be cultivated with peculiar care. And accordingly, this subject, the Conflict of Laws, has attracted the especial attention of eminent American Jurists, and has been treated by them in works of great value. Judge Story's *Commentaries on the Conflict of Laws* is, I believe, acknowledged as a classical book on this matter; a distinction which it appears to me eminently to deserve.

I have already stated that Vattel ascribes to Wolf the merit of having separated International Law from the general body of Morality, as a subject of distinct treatment. In Vattel's own book (*The Law of Nations*), two subjects are combined, which it is, I think, convenient to separate as different provinces of Morality, and which accordingly I have separated in my published work—International Jus, and Polity;—the Morality of a State in its transactions with other States; and in its internal actions, its legislation and administration, which have a reference only to its own citizens. The last-mentioned subject, Polity, occupies Vattel's First Book, in which he treats of the Duties of a State towards itself. The determination of these Duties proceeds upon the same principle as the determination of their international Rights and Obligations; the principle which is stated at the very outset of the work, and frequently referred to in the sequel;—namely, that a Nation or State is a moral person, having an understanding and a will peculiar to itself, and susceptible of obligations and laws. This conception of a State is, indeed, involved in every view of international relations; and consequently, in every view of *intra-national*

action. We conceive two nations, acting towards each other through their rulers and governors, of whatever kind these, by the national constitutions, are, to be like two persons, in that they may respect or violate each other's Rights, and may act to each other rightly or wrongly. Nations are capable of some at least of the Virtues;—of Justice and Truthfulness evidently, for these must govern them in the making and keeping of Treaties; and of Benevolence also, for surely one nation may act kindly to another; as when a stronger defends a weaker from oppression. And as Nations have a moral character in their aspect to strangers without, so have they also a moral character in their aspect towards their own subjects. As they have Duties to others, they have also Duties to themselves. Such Duties are enumerated by Vattel under three heads;—First, the Duty of providing for the necessities of the Nation, by encouraging agriculture and commerce, and providing means of intercourse and traffic, as roads and coined money:—Second, the promotion of the true felicity of a Nation, by furthering Education, Arts, Sciences, Religion, and the administration of Justice:—Third, protection of the Nation against attacks from without, by its military resources and military virtues.

You will find all these Duties of the State arranged in the Book (B. v.) which treats of Polity in my published work: but you will find them arranged in a different order; for some of these Duties of the State, being essential to its very existence, may be termed Obligations; at least by comparison. They are like Obligations in this; that there is a power which enforces them, or at least, punishes the violation of them;—namely, that tendency to the dissolution of the State, to political death, which the neglect of such Duties or Obligations occasions. The Obligations which are of this kind, are, the Obligation of National Defense; the Obligation of upholding Law; and the Obligation of

repressing Sedition; all which may be included in the Obligation of Self-preservation. If we call these Duties, we must call them the *Lower* Duties of the State, to distinguish them from those *Higher* Duties, of promoting in the people moral virtues by wise legislation, and political virtues by a combination of Freedom and Order in the constitution; for these too are Duties of the State. And along with these higher Duties, are others, which I have just mentioned as inculcated by Vattel: the promotion of the Education of the people, and the maintenance of Religion in the nation by the establishment of due relations between the State and the Christian Church. On this latter subject I shall make a few remarks in my succeeding lectures. At present, since Vattel, whom I have mentioned, is a writer of some authority, I may, as an example of his tone in treating such subjects, and as an introduction to what I may hereafter have to say, quote a few sentences from his book. After speaking of Liberty of Conscience, which he declares to be a right of the citizens of a state he adds (B. I. c. XII. § 129):

“But we should take care not to extend this liberty beyond its just bounds. A citizen has only the right of never being obliged to do anything in religious affairs, and not that of doing outwardly whatever he pleases, though it may proceed from his regard to society. The establishment of religion by the laws, and its public exercise, are matters of state, and are necessarily under the jurisdiction of the public authority. If all men ought to serve God, the entire nation, in its national capacity, is doubtless obliged to serve and honour him. And as it ought to discharge this important duty in that manner which appears to the nation to be the best; the nation is to determine the religion it would follow, and the public worship it would establish.”

You see that he asserts in the most pointed manner

that religious worship and the adoption of the true religion are duties incumbent, not only upon individuals as individuals, but also upon nations as nations. I shall afterwards have to return to the consideration of this doctrine and its consequences.

While speaking on the subject of the Law of Nations, as International Law has most commonly been called, there is one remark which I will take the liberty of making. This branch of Morality appears to be eminently suited to form a part of a liberal education. It is indeed that province of Morality which those persons for whose use a liberal education is more especially intended, are most commonly required to know. Those who by birth, or station, or peculiar tastes and talents, are led to take a part in conducting the foreign affairs of their country, must of course be well acquainted with the Law of Nations. It is their professional study; and though it is commonly, I believe, entered upon when the education of the University is terminated; yet this need not be so, and might advantageously be otherwise; for the professional knowledge will be all the more securely and solidly possessed, from being sought at an earlier period, and connected with the general moral and philosophical views which naturally spring up in the course of the studies of the University. And this, which I have said with reference to those who may have hereafter to make diplomatic employments their business, is true in almost an equal degree of those who are destined to be legislators and magistrates at home; for the great questions,—what the Laws of a Nation ought to be, and how they ought to be administered,—are likely to be regarded in an enlarged and enlightened spirit by one who knows in what respects the Laws of different Nations differ; and who has been accustomed to see, running through the Laws of Nations, and regulating the intercourse of Nations, a Law of Nations

acknowledged by all, and derived from universal and eternal principles of equity and justice.

You may indeed find perhaps that some international jurists do not formally allow this. Thus Mr. Wheaton says\*, that there is no Universal Law of Nations; meaning by this, that there are no Universal *Laws* of Nations, recognized by all nations in every part of the globe and in every stage of civilization. But though there are no such universal *Laws*, there is a universal Law, a principle of equity, of which all special Laws are developements. The Law of Nations with which we are concerned, has, as Mr. Wheaton says, for its visible basis, the customs, usages, and conventions observed in the mutual intercourse of European nations, and the American nations which have sprung from the European stock:—but then, these customs and usages have grown up as reasonable and equitable customs and usages; these conventions have been the last result of negotiations in which the arguments used were drawn from principles of justice on each side. In International Morality, as in all Morality, the Moral Nature of man supplies us with the Conceptions, the positive Laws, with the Definitions, of the subject. In the Law of Nations, as in all subjects, we have the Ideas and the Facts;—the Ideas are the Idea of the Good Faith, of the Justice, and we trust also, of the Humanity of Nations; the Facts are the History of Nations.

And there is, in this point of view, another strong recommendation of the study of International Law in the University: this study is a mode of studying Morality, free from some of the most obvious defects of ethical discussions, in their more usual form. International Jus is a Morality which is not metaphysical, and which is real. It is a branch of Morality which is now separated from the wide, abstruse,

\* *Elements of International Law*, c. i. § 9.

interminable discussions of moral philosophy so fascinating to a few persons, but to many students, wearisome and uncongenial;—disquisitions respecting the origin of moral distinctions, the existence of a moral faculty, and the like. International Law deals with far more distinct and tangible questions than these;—Rights of Search and Capture; Rules of Boundaries of States; Treaties and their Interpretation; and the like. These questions, though always requiring the true Moralist's spirit, yet require also something of the Lawyer's acuteness and definiteness in the application of given rules. And again, in this department, Morality is not only definite in its form, but real in its efficacy. That which is allowed to be right, is thereby Law. The conclusions of theoretical writers of eminence, because they are their conclusions, have a validity in the transactions of nations. International Jurists, even those who merely write books, are International Legislators. Thus Morality has, in this department, a peculiar reality. In following the discussions of questions of right and wrong, you perceive that you are not merely a spectator of a barren and unprofitable war of words and notions; but that *that* which is thus said, in so far as it is really conclusive, will in the end have its effect; will pass into the transactions and usages of nations, and influence the course of the world.

But a further consideration worth attending to, is this; that the study of International Law, begun at an early period, gives a peculiar interest and charm to all historical reading. When you have begun to regard the constitutions and transactions of nations, their negotiations and treaties, their war and peace, not as mere tumultuary and unconnected things, in which no order and no principle can be found; but as examples of classes of relations and actions;—as each exemplifying, and conforming to or violating the customary Laws of Nations; the events then take hold of

the mind with a new power. History is then no longer merely an amusing tale: it is an account of the proceedings of moral agents, such as those which still occupy the world, acting according to rules which still prevail, though modified, it may be, by the progress of ten or of twenty centuries. This is the case even with ancient history. I have already noticed how copiously Grotius has used ancient history as an exemplification of his doctrines; and I think any one, after seeing his extracts in the connection in which he presents them, will look at these same passages with a fresh interest, when he meets with them in reading the authors themselves. They seem to have, by such a connection, acquired a new hold of the business and nature of men. And with regard to modern history, this is much more eminently the case. Indeed we may almost say that modern history is international law put in action. It is a series of Trials in the Courts of International Equity of Europe. The terms of International Law are the leading words in every page of the historian's record. Alliances, Guarantees, Confederations, Rights of War, of Neutrality, of Search, and the like, are the matters involved in the narrative at every step: and you will not understand what the question in these transactions is, except you look at these things as governed by Rules; and have some knowledge,—some exact and connected knowledge, what these Rules are. International Law, as it now stands, is the final result of modern history, summing up all that has been done, in the compass of a few chapters of rules and principles.

There is one other point of view in which the study of International Law may be regarded; and in which it will have, I should hope, an interest for some of you, beyond anything which can belong to the mere history of the past. We may look to International Law, not only as a means of understanding and realizing the history of the past; but also as a means of influencing for good the history of the

future. If ever the transactions of nations are to be regulated by an improved Morality, this Morality must appear as International Law. If Justice and Humanity are to prevail in the intercourse of States, more than they have yet done, it must be by making the maxims of the public Law of States more just and more humane. And is not this a result to look forwards to with desire and with hope? I say with hope, as well as with desire; for who will deny that the Law of Nations is now more just and more humane than it was in former ages? Look at the general acknowledgement of rules of equity in deciding the conflicting claims of States;—at the interposition of powerful nations in defence of nations and races enslaved and oppressed;—at the diminution of the horrors of war by confining its severest inflictions as much as possible to the combatants only:—these, and many other features, show that there is a progress in this respect;—that however much remains to be done, whatever blemishes and imperfections in the justice and humanity of States we may still have to lament; yet that they aim, more steadily and more consistently than of yore, at being just and humane. To promote, to complete this tendency, to carry it out in every sphere of action, is the true business of all who are concerned with the transactions of nations, either in their external or their internal aspects;—either in action or in argument.

And further:—to seek in International Law such a progress, such an influence as this, is a course of thought and study peculiarly in harmony with some of the best tendencies of our time. You have many of you probably found, or you will hereafter find, in the literature of our own days,—in the vehement utterances which most move the spirit of the nations around us, and of many among ourselves,—demands for a bond which shall unite all nations together in the names of justice and humanity. You will

find men claiming such an union in virtue of their common human nature;—their moral nature, and the hopes and prospects which that reveals to them. They now see that the dream of the middle ages,—that such an union of men as moral beings was to be found in their union with the Church of Rome,—was but a dream; and a dream from which all the world has awaked: the pope is now no longer looked to as the arbiter of the rights of nations; the Supreme Authority by which justice between State and State is to be enforced; the universal guardian of humanity. These pretensions, never realized in the history of the world, have now vanished away from the imaginations and memories of men. Yet still, men require that the rights of nations should be respected;—that justice should be universally regarded;—that humanity should be treated with reverence. And they see that the hope of such results lies, not in any *supranational* authority, but in a universal *international* understanding. They see that the real progress of the Morality of Nations must show itself in the moral progress of the Law of Nations:—that there cannot be a Universal Church which shall sway the temporal as well as the spiritual sceptre; but that there must be a Universal Tribunal of nations, before which the advocates of oppressed and wronged States shall always be heard; and from which just sentences and humane counsels shall be delivered by wise and loving voices, listened to by all mankind, because all have learnt to reverence wisdom and love. The progress of International Law and Morality tends to such a point as this; and because this is its tendency, International Law may be considered as that part of modern literature in which the progress of our world is most concerned, and which is therefore the most worthy of your attention and of your interest.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### THE RELATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

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THE subject of the present Lecture will be the Relation of Church and State. This is a subject of which the treatment as a branch of Morality is undoubtedly extremely difficult, both on account of its complexity and extent, and on account of its including some of the fiercest controversies of the present day. But it is also a subject without which any scheme of Morality must be very defective ; for Morality must extend to political as well as individual action ; and political action, like individual, cannot be fully considered without referring to religion. Morality must be applied to the actions of the State, as well as of each member of it ; for the State, as well as its members, is capable of right and wrong action ; and of the actions of the State, none are more important than those which affect the Church. Hence, as I have said, the Moralist cannot easily avoid including, among the subjects of his province, the Relations of Church and State. And this, accordingly, has been the practice of writers on Morals, as we all familiarly know, from our acquaintance with Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*.

In my Treatise on *Morality*, I have, in like manner, included *Polity* ; and have attempted to establish Principles according to which political actions,—the actions of States,—are to be judged, as right or wrong. I take the liberty of referring particularly to what I have published on this head ; because what I have said in this part of the work, more than in any other, appears to me to require some additional

explanation, to prevent its being misunderstood; while, at the same time, I hope to be able to present to you some of the leading principles belonging to this subject, in such a manner that they shall be intelligible and, I trust, satisfactory, to those who are unacquainted with what I have elsewhere said.

I shall not, however, think it necessary to offer here any prolonged reason to prove that which I consider as the fundamental principle,—the general basis of all conclusions on this subject; namely, that the State is a moral agent. The proof of this is indeed involved in what I have already said, that the State,—the community acting by the peculiar modes which belong to its public action,—may act rightly or wrongly: for what is a moral agent, but he who can act rightly or wrongly? The State can act wrongly:—it can make an unjust and cruel war upon another nation; it can pass iniquitous and oppressive laws; it can put an innocent citizen to death by the hand of the executioner. No one will doubt that such acts are wrong. And they are specially acts of the State; for they are such acts as no citizen or collection of citizens can perform, except by directing the acts of the State. To make war, to make laws, to carry out the sentence of law by the executioner's hand, are public acts; and when such acts are iniquitous and cruel, the State acts iniquitously and cruelly, therefore wrongly. And as it can thus act wrongly, we must, of course, allow that it can act rightly:—rightly, at any rate, in abstaining from wrong; but also, rightly, in remedying wrong; and again rightly, in aiming at right and good and great objects. A State acts rightly, when it pays its debts and acts honestly:—it acts rightly in a higher sense, when, after being thus just, it is generous towards good objects:—when it encourages the progress of agriculture, commerce, manu-

factures, the cultivation and improvement of the fine arts, of the sciences; the general diffusion of knowledge among its subjects.

I suppose that no one will deny that, in this sense, the State is a moral agent; and that its moral agency extends to such subjects. You will allow, I think, that this is so;—that the State has duties, and that *these* are duties of the State.

I will not, in order to convey this principle, use phrases which have startled people in our own generation, and have been objected to; such as that the State has a *Conscience*. This expression was used a little while ago by Political Moralists, without giving any offense; for instance, by Vattel. But such expressions are not in the smallest degree necessary for conveying this principle, and for establishing those truths which I hope to satisfy you are grounded upon it. You will allow that the State has Duties; for it is a Duty of the State to pay its debts, to protect its merchants, to promote comfort among its working population, to encourage the progress of Art among its artists, of Science among its men of science.

Or, if you doubt whether such objects as the latter, the promotion of Art and Science in the nation, be universally and at all periods of a nation's progress, Duties of the State; you will at least allow, I think, that in the higher forms of a nation's existence, when it is rich and great and fully organized;—when the Arts and Sciences are loved and pursued by some classes of its citizens, and are the object of universal regard in all ranks, and among surrounding nations;—then, at least, it is the Duty of the State to promote the advance of Arts and Sciences, within its own confines. If you hesitate to allow the universality of this Duty, you will only claim an exception on the part of

States, so rude and barbarous, that their political being is imperfect. If their organization is of a low order, their consciousness and power of action slightly developed ;—if they are sufficiently occupied with attending to the necessary cares of the rudest forms of political life,—in staving off starvation, and repressing intestine violence or external invasion ;—then, indeed, we may excuse States from such Duties as we speak of ;—we may excuse them, on account of this their temporary condition, and therefore, for a time. But even then, we look forward to a happier time ;—we hope for a period when they will not be content with mere living, but will seek to live in comfort, in ease, in elegance, as a thoughtful, intellectual community. We trust that, as Aristotle says, the State, which began to exist that men might live at all, will be continued that men may live well. We trust that the State will learn to see the value of Art and Science, of beauty and knowledge : and we desire that this should be so, although we see that, with this appreciation of such objects as being good, come to the State the Duties of aiming at such objects because they are good.

These Duties of a highly civilized and highly organized State,—to cultivate Art and Knowledge, and the like,—I now mention, principally in order to illustrate in a general manner, my Principle that the State has Duties ; this being, as I have said, the fundamental Principle on the subject now before us. But your full agreement in this my illustration of the argument, is not necessary to your concurrence in the course of the argument itself. For I do not doubt that you will assent to that Duty of the State with which I have here principally to do, far more unhesitatingly and universally, than to the Duties of promoting Art and Science. You will allow, I think, without any hesitation or limitation, that it is the Duty of the State to promote the moral and intellectual culture of its subjects :—to give them, or see

that they have, a moral and intellectual education. This you will allow to be the Duty of all States ;—even of those, so far as their lights and their means allow, which are rude and imperfectly organized ; but still more, of States well organized, and consisting of a number of highly cultured men, and of large classes of moral and intelligent citizens. You will readily agree with me in asserting the Duty of such States, to provide for and promote the moral and intellectual education of their subjects.

This doctrine, indeed, has been so often asserted in modern times, and so generally acknowledged, that it must sound to you like a truism. You have especially been accustomed to hear it asserted, in discussions on this subject, of the Connection of Church and State. And you are probably already expecting to hear the remaining steps of the argument follow this one ;—namely, that there cannot be a moral education without religion ; and that therefore, the State, in order to discharge its duty of giving to its subjects a moral education, must ally itself with the Religious Body, the Church.

I do not wish to deny that this statement approaches to the line of reasoning along which I wish to lead you ; but this general statement does not bring into view the peculiar conditions which determine the course of action which the State must take, in order to perform its Duty in this matter : and what I especially wish to speak of at present, is the mode in which the State's course of action is determined by circumstances.

All duties are determined, that is, are limited and shaped, by circumstances. There are external facts, which determine the meaning of the terms in which duty is expressed ;—which determine the import of the ideas in which it is conceived. It is a duty to respect the property, the family ties, the reasonable demands, of other men ;

but external facts of law and previous history decide what *are* each man's property, what are valid family ties, and what are reasonable demands. And in like manner it is a duty to promote, when our own moral and intellectual condition allows us to do so, the moral and intellectual culture of those who depend upon us and look up to us; our children, for instance, or our youthful relatives and companions. But it must depend upon circumstances,—upon the previous history and employment of these younger persons,—what is *for them* moral and intellectual culture;—what benefit of this kind they can receive and we can give. And in attempting to carry into effect the duty of the State, to promote the moral and intellectual culture of its people, this condition and limitation comes into play on a larger scale. The previous history and condition of the people,—the progress they have already made in intelligence and in morality,—the classes that exist among them, from whom or through whom they are willing or may be induced to receive lessons of virtue or of knowledge;—all these circumstances must necessarily affect the form which this duty of the State must assume, when it becomes a matter of practice. The State's duty of its own social intellectual and moral culture, depends upon its social intellectual and moral History; so that we cannot say absolutely that it is a duty to teach this or that, or by this or by that method; for what *can* be taught, and by what method, will depend upon what has been already learnt, and what methods of teaching and learning can be framed out of the elements of the existing society.

And yet, again, this must not be carried too far, as if, either in the case of private or of public duty, the moral and intellectual teaching which we are called upon to give were to be regulated and governed altogether by the current thoughts and habits of society, and the existing relations

of classes. We are not to be satisfied with merely fostering their prejudices, and with continuing the teaching of their prevailing teachers, whatever that be. We are not to be indifferent whether we exercise their minds in learning truth or in learning error;—whether we establish in their thoughts a lower or a higher standard of morality. If we are compelled to begin with countenancing error, we do so only that we may pass from error to truth. If we are compelled for a time to tolerate a low morality, the very essence of our notion of moral culture consists in rising from this to what is higher. We may bend more or less to circumstances; but no circumstances can make us regard Falsehood and mere Legality as equal in value to Truth and genuine Goodness.

We thus come in view of two opposite elements, both of which must enter into our Conception of such Duties as these. On the one hand, the very notion of intellectual and moral culture implies that Truth and Goodness are the tendency of our teaching;—on the other hand, History must determine what our teaching must be, that we may impart any culture at all. We find, here, as in every part of our inquiries, the two poles of a universal antithesis:—Ideas and Facts—Internal Thoughts and External Things. We have to teach Truth and Goodness;—there is the Idea, the Thought:—but we have to teach these lessons to men ignorant, thoughtless, prejudiced, unintelligent, divided into classes, these classes already slavishly obsequious one to another, or equally blinded by mutual anger and fear. The universal antithesis of Ideas and Facts assumes, in such cases as these, a larger aspect than in most others: for the Facts are, the whole social and intellectual History of the Nation, while the Idea is the whole body of Knowledge and of Morality which can be made use of in the culture of man's mind and heart; which is of course no less

than the whole circle of human knowledge and the completest fulness of pure morality. As a result of the State Duty of which we have been speaking, the State has to make its people moral and wise, by means adapted to their past history and present state; but it may not be content with anything less than making them truly moral and truly wise.

And here the teaching of Religion must evidently come in, and must form a part of this Idea of moral and intellectual culture to which our Duty points. For how shall we teach true Morality without teaching Religion, as its deepest basis and necessary sanction? Or how shall we teach truth, if we stop short of those highest and ultimate truths with which Religion is concerned? We know that Morality and Truth, according to their Idea, involve or lead to Religion; and it has been ever found that practically, men could not be effectually taught at all, except they were taught to look onwards to these Ideas. They could make no progress in morality, without holding the religious sanctions of morality; they could feel no strong and permanent interest in knowledge, except they were allowed to dwell on that largest of problems,—how the universe was made and is governed. Religious Truth is therefore, I say, involved in the Idea of the moral and intellectual culture of a people. Such a culture cannot be practically pursued, without the introduction of Religion into our teaching.

I do not say at present *how far* this Religious Truth must be followed into its detail, in order to discharge its office in our teaching. That is a question which may require for its determination some attention to the other side of the antithesis,—the Fact,—the History of the people. But the Fact must not be allowed to deform the Idea, so much as to pervert the nature of religious Truth. The progress at which we aim, at which it is our Duty

to aim, consists rather in this ;—that the Idea should more and more mould the Facts ;—that external relations of society and the mental habits of men should be more and more conformed to the Ideas of right acting and right thinking ;—that Virtue and Truth, and Religious Truth as an essential part of both, should have a larger and larger share in determining the form of society and the history of mankind. This is our general notion of historical progress ;—that the Idea gains upon the Fact ;—that the external objects become more and more conformable to the internal law ;—that things happen and men's conditions are regulated, not arbitrarily, or casually, but more and more according to the rules of Truth and Goodness. This is real progress : this Triumph of Ideas over Facts is really the only triumph which we can entirely approve and admire.

In order to the real progress of a State, then, and in order to the discharge of its duty of the moral and intellectual culture of its people, it is requisite that it should accept Truth, and should accept it as Truth ;—that it should accept Religious Truth, and accept it as Truth. And having accepted it, the State will of course act upon it as Truth. Having accepted religious morality as the true morality, the State will promote the teaching of religious morality, as the true moral culture. Having accepted religious knowledge as the highest knowledge, the State will require the teaching of other knowledge, so as to be consistent with religious knowledge. The State will make its social arrangements so as to forward and extend such teaching ; will provide teachers ; will acquiesce, if need be, in their becoming a large and important class of society ; for indeed how can *they* fail to be so, who have to discharge such an office as that of imparting and applying to passing events the whole body of religious Truth ? The State will treat the teachers of religion with deference and honour.

To do this, is to conform the Facts of Society to the very Idea of Religion; for what is worthy of deference and honour if Religious Truth be not? and how can these be paid to the Teaching, if it be withheld from the Teachers?

The adoption, therefore, of religious Truth *as* Truth, as was done, for example, by Constantine, when he adopted the Christian religion as the religion of the State, was a clear and decided step of real progress: and the adoption of religious truth as the basis of moral and intellectual culture, was a necessary consequence of the acceptance of it as the Truth. If Constantine, pretending to adopt the Christian religion as the true religion, had refused his support and protection to classes and institutions which had for their object the Christian education of the young, and the Christian teaching of all, every one would have judged that his pretended conversion was insincere; every one would have seen the inconsistency of which, acting on the part of the State, he was guilty. When Ethelbert was converted by Augustine, it was a natural consequence that he encouraged his religious instructor in teaching the people, and gave him a maintenance to enable him to carry on that office.

It cannot, I think, be considered as otherwise than entirely consistent and inevitable that sovereigns, thus accepting religious truth as truth, should encourage the teachers of it, and should establish religion in the way in which religion was established, after the nations of modern Europe had embraced Christianity: namely, by allowing the clergy to acquire a property in their churches, and other possessions, given them for the support of religious teaching; by acknowledging them, as wise advisers; by assigning to them public support as the teachers of the people; and by granting to them such immunities as were requisite or appropriate to the discharge of their functions.

That the Church in any nation, that is, the whole body of Christian citizens, may rightly be provided by the State with the means of Christian teaching, when the State itself has adopted the Christian religion as the truth, can, I should think, be denied as a general proposition, by none. Such a conduct appears to be involved in the very Idea of the adoption of the Truth. The moral character of the State leads us to the State Duty of promoting a moral and intellectual education of the people;—the acceptance of religious truth by the State leads in like manner to the duty of promoting a religious education of the people.

Such is the Idea of a Religious State, when we consider Religion as one and undivided. But this fair aspect of the Idea is clouded over and deformed. There springs up a source of trouble and confusion in the very Idea itself. The notion of Religious Truth, as one and undivided, is shaken. There appear several claimants for the name of Religious Truth. Truth, indeed, can be but one; but opinions are many; and each man asserts his own opinion as the truth. Here, in the ideal side of our antithesis, comes in a separation. The Idea, when it has already to a great extent reduced the facts into conformity with it, is itself broken up. We have here a new Fact, which occasions a new difficulty in constructing the Idea of a *Religious State*. How shall the State know what is Christian Truth, when Christian Truth appears under many aspects? How shall the State support the Church in teaching religion, when men teach it to themselves and to each other, and teach so variously?

With regard to the former question, How the State is to decide what is Christian Truth, the answer is the same as it would be if the same question were asked respecting an individual. The State must determine what is Christian Truth by looking for it *as* Truth:—by believing that there is a

Christian Truth, and accepting that which has the marks and character of Truth. No doubt, this is more difficult in the case of a State than of an individual: but it is the business of the Governours of a State to deal with such difficulties; and they must, in this as in other matters, act for the State according to their stations. They have to determine for the State what is Justice, what is Humanity; they may in like manner have to determine for the State what is true Religion.

They may have to improve or reform the national institutions and the national education in many ways; and and as in other matters, so also in matters of religion. Under the direction of its governors and magistrates, a State may be converted to the Christian religion when it is yet heathen: under the same direction, it may be converted to a Reformed Christianity when its religion is become erroneous and corrupt. These are points in which a nation, acting through its Rulers and Directors, has a power and a right of action, no less than on questions of war and peace, just and unjust laws, the promotion of agriculture, commerce, industry and the arts.

And we are not here inventing imaginary cases. We know that, practically speaking, Nations have asserted to themselves this power and this right, and have exercised it through their Rulers and Governors. They have in this manner not only universally and in all ages, in their public acts, treated religion as a thing of powerful and pervasive influence among men; but they have also treated the question of true or false religion as one with which they were concerned and with which they were competent to deal. They have connected themselves by special institutions and acts with the Christian body within their territories, and have thus publicly recognized the Church within the nation. They have claimed the right and acknowledged the duty of

accepting Christian truth and rejecting un-Christian error ; —and in that which professes to be Christian teaching, of accepting that which is true and rejecting that which is false.

The body of Christians within each State, thus recognized by the State by means of national institutions and acts, and accepted as fit teachers of religious truth, may be termed the *National Church*. And upon the condition of the National Church, must depend in a very great degree the nation's means of promoting the religious culture of its subjects, and as connected with this, their moral, intellectual, and social culture.

What is to be the form, the boundary, the office, the power of the National Church:—these are undoubtedly questions of very great difficulty. The whole history of mankind shews how difficult the world has found this problem to be. Yet still through all ages nations have gone on labouring at the solution of the problem. They have sought this solution through struggles of the secular and ecclesiastical powers, through schisms, civil wars, rebellions, reformations, restorations, revolutions;—yet still animated in their exertions and sustained in their calamities by the conviction that these, whatever inflictions they might bring, were still far smaller evils than a nation without religion would be. Believing in the divine origin and inestimable privileges of the Christian Church, they could not, for any obstacles or misfortunes, desist from their attempts to possess a National Church which should be a member of that Christian Church.

There is indeed one Idea, larger and loftier even than that of a National Church, which at various periods, Statesmen and Churchmen have tried to realize in a historical shape:—I mean, that of a Universal Christian Church with a visible sovereignty established in it, and with all the States

of the Christian world for its members. "In this Polity," to borrow Dr. Arnold's words\*, "national and political distinctions were wholly lost sight of [by the Church]. The Vicar of Christ and his general Council knew nothing of England or of France, of Germany or of Spain: they made laws for *Christendom*,—a magnificent word, and well expressing those high and consistent notions of unity on which the Church of Rome based its system." This Idea of Church-government strove to become a reality in men's eyes, by engaging in its service the secular power of each country. And in the course of the events thus brought about, it appeared clearly, as I conceive, that this Idea of a Universal Visible Church so applied was incongruous and inconsistent with the necessary course of the world. When the Popes deposed Sovereigns, gave away kingdoms, and claimed the two swords, the temporal and the spiritual, they set up claims for which they had no religious warrant, and which were inconsistent with the national life of Christian nations. The scheme of a Universal Monarchy residing in the Catholic Church was introduced into the world's affairs by various Popes;—Gregory the Seventh; Innocent the Third; Boniface the Eighth: but it was rejected by the nations of Europe. England saw with indignation her Ruler John lend himself to such assumptions; and such interpositions of ecclesiastical power were soon put aside. It appeared plainly that Nations were the highest units which were to appear in the scheme of the world;—the greatest persons which were to act in the drama of history;—the subjects with whom Providence was to have its dealings on the large scale.

I would beg leave here to refer to a paragraph in my *Morality*, for the purpose of explaining what I have written on this subject. It is there said (1125) that "if the whole

\* *Church Reform*, p. 272.

community, acting through its constitutional authorities, were to offer their allegiance to the spiritual head of the Church, and if he were persuaded that he could exercise such authority with advantage, it would seem to be a Christian duty to accept the office." But I have added, that "this does not at all disturb what has been already said of the evils of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy (1113);" and that "taking into account what has been said of those evils, we should judge that the nation who thus sought for a spiritual domination to be established among them were much mistaken, and had made little progress in political wisdom."

The object of this paragraph was to state, that in the cases in which a nation had really, and with the national consent, given up its sovereignty to a spiritual authority; however bad a polity we might think this, our condemnation must rather fall upon the folly and ignorance of the nation in making such a concession, than upon the injustice and ambition of the Church in accepting it. This I think the words I have used sufficiently imply. One of my critics quoted the first part of the passage and omitted the second part, which the first merely serves to introduce; and he thus conveyed an entirely erroneous view of the import of the passage; which erroneous view he offered to the reader as mine. It might seem unnecessary to put this hypothetical case so prominently forwards; but the statement was made in order to lead to another statement contained in the next paragraph (1126); in which it is declared that the sovereign of a country has no right, given him by his function, to resign his sovereignty to the Pope; and that if he do this, he has abdicated his throne, and made it necessary for the other branches of the constitution to provide for the safety of the State.

The impossibility of realizing the Idea of a Universal Ecclesiastical Supremacy, according to the views of Papal

Rome, appeared in the course of the political history of Christian nations, even before the Great Reformation in religion. The State could not be reduced to a mere member of the Universal Church. It had a life of its own;—a political, and therefore a moral life, which could not be made to depend directly upon religious principles. And again:—the Church could not discharge its assumed office of a just judge and benignant protector of nations and people in their secular interests. While such pretensions were asserted, its spiritual influences upon individuals, the most precious part of its office, were impaired and corrupted. It became necessary to establish some other relation between these two Ideas, the Church and the State, and it also became necessary to reform the Church itself in consequence of its internal corruptions.

We are thus led to a series of changes in the relations of Church and State, which went to different lengths in different European Nations. The extent to which such changes ought to go, was, in each Nation, a historical problem, to be determined by the amount of the corruptions and abuses which existed in the previous condition of things, by the attainable means of remedying these evils, and by the danger of destroying what was good along with the bad. No doubt, in many instances, unworthy motives and passions mixed with the genuine love of a pure religion, in the breasts of those who were the principal actors in the events which accompanied these changes. But the great bulk of the men of the time never for a moment ceased to aim at the great dominant Idea of a Religious, Christian State. All wished to have the people taught the Will of God, though they might differ as to the manner of teaching and the particular points of the doctrine. All wished to have an Established Church, and a Church established because it was true. The Puritans among ourselves, no less than the

High Churchmen, had this for their aim: and the great struggle of the seventeenth century in England and Scotland was, whether the Established Church should be Episcopal or Presbyterian. The Independents, even in their hour of triumph, with Cromwell at their head, went no further than to demand a complete liberty for themselves. The Established Church was never disestablished.

The same view has regulated the history of this Nation up to our own times;—has governed polity, education, social life, literature, and all the most general influences which enter into the moral and social culture of men. No doubt this historical derivation of the National Church of England has at some periods been marked by events which stamped its Nationality as at the time defective; for example, when, at the end of the long struggle of the civil wars, a large body of the ministers of religion were ejected by the terms of the establishment as then settled. But if those who then drew the limiting lines of the establishment acted wrongly in narrowing their ground-plan more than the scheme of a National Church required; yet still, in so far as they made it their business to establish and define a National Church, and to place it on such a foundation that it might last for ages, their design was a great and good one, suited to the highest conceptions of the duties and destinies of a State, and of the office and benefit of a Church.

But the Reformation which led, in this country, to a diversity of opinions respecting the organization of a National Church, led, among the rest, to an opinion that the Church ought to be altogether independent of the State;—that the ministers and teachers of the Church, as such, ought not to be invested with worldly goods, power, or authority, on the part of the Nation;—that there ought to be a Separation of the Church and State. This tenet,

of the Separation of Church and State, divests the nation of its religious character, to which, as we hold, it is its highest business to aspire. We cannot, as I have already said, assent to any view which reduces the objects of the State to this low level;—which represents it as having no concern with anything higher than the gross material interests of the people, the preservation of person and property. The part of government which attends to them is not Polity, but only Police. A State which has no aims beyond these is only in the first stage of national progress. This is, as Chevalier Bunsen calls it\*, “an embryonic condition;”—a necessary preparation, perhaps, to other conditions; but still we must avoid, as he says, looking upon this embryonic condition as the highest completion;—upon the national starting point of a youthful nation as the goal and haven of all natural developement. The expressions which he uses embody the views which I have been attempting to explain, in their bearing upon the subject which we are here discussing—the Polity of the Separation of Church and State. “Independency,” he says,—for as we know the *Independents* of our own country were the especial advocates of this Polity,—“with its American Gospel and Church—the doctrine of the so-called *Separation of Church and State*, loses the conception of Nationality, as well as of Universality. It protests against the State, and loses the Nation.” We may add, that while it aims at maintaining the purity of the Church, it degrades the State by depriving it of its religious character. We cannot assent to this view. The State is an institution of Providence; and is intended, like all the gifts of Providence, for man’s preservation first, but for his elevation and moral progress afterwards. This even the heathen philosopher could see—*γενομένη μὲν ἕνεκα τοῦ ζῆν, οὐσα δὲ ἕνεκα τοῦ ἐν ζῆν*. The State also has its

\* *Kirche der Zukunft*, p. 139.

divinity, *its* sacredness; and is injuriously dealt with by the political philosopher, when it is treated as if it never could have anything to do with religion. As it advances towards its higher objects, the evidence and reward of its advance is, the interest it feels and shows in the highest concerns of man. Without going so far as Dr. Arnold does\*, when he asserts that the Nation is the Church, we may agree with him when he says, that the object of Church is also the object of the State in its highest form; namely, "the intellectual and moral improvement of mankind, in order to their reaching their greatest perfection and enjoying their highest happiness." Without venturing to say as he says, that in a State which had no established religion, the establishment of paganism would be a blessing†, we may most confidently agree with him in saying, that in a country which has an established Church, the destruction of the Church would be the greatest calamity which could befall the nation.

For in a country of which the laws and institutions have for ages recognized it as a main object to embody the idea of a Religious Nation;—which has always had a National Church as a national recognition of Christian Truth;—an Established Church as an established public means of Christian sympathy and Christian teaching throughout the people;—if we were to conceive the destruction of the Established Church, we cannot judge of it otherwise than as an enormous retrograde step in the moral and religious career of the nation. Such a step could not fail to be regarded as a triumph of the enemies of religion, and as an act by which the nation rejects in despair the religious character to which it has hitherto aspired. After taking such a step, the Nation would have within it a very large body of its citizens who would be altogether alienated

\* *Church Reform*, p. 331.

† p. 311.

from it in heart, because they would conceive a State which had cast off religion to be an odious and wicked institution ; and who would labour to give to Christian principles, in some other way, the influence which had been taken from them by the public repudiation of the Church. While this alienation from the fundamental principles of the State prevailed, if the State were to attempt to discharge its duty of promoting the education of the people, it would meet with obstacles on every side, and would have to maintain a constant conflict with the love which would naturally remain for the ancient form of things, in which education was connected with the teaching and ministrations of the Church. Whatever difficulties may be thrown in the way of an education, by the existence of an established Church of which the nationality is incomplete, would exist in a much greater degree in a nation in which there was a *disestablished* Church. And the consequences of the disestablishment of Churches, no less than the prevalence of Established Churches, shows that men, themselves religious and Christian, cannot be satisfied with any Idea of a Nation which does not present it to them as a religious and Christian nation.

When, within a nation of Christian men there are large and powerful bodies of persons holding different opinions as to the mode in which the National Church is to be moulded and conducted, it may be difficult to frame any Constitution which does not exclude a part of the people. It may be difficult to establish any Church so that there shall not be a large body of Dissenters. And the act by which a National Church is established, and the institutions by which it discharges its office as the established Church, and by which the Establishment is protected, must generally involve some exclusion of Dissenters.

But it does not at all necessarily follow that Dissenters must wish to destroy the established Church. They may

see in the Church a recognition of the religious character of the nation ; and this they may highly approve, although the recognition is not so pure, or so national, as they would desire. They may think that the Established Church is the defender of religious truth against worse forms of error, although they may think that the doctrines of the Church are not themselves free from error. They may perceive that they themselves share in the advantages of belonging to a religious nation, in which a reformed Church is established ; although, so long as they are Dissenters, some of the advantages of such a condition cannot extend to them. An English Dissenter may approve, and even be willing to support and maintain, the establishment of the English Church, as a security for the preservation of the National evangelical religion ; just as a younger brother may approve of and be ready to maintain the Law of Primogeniture, as a security for the preservation of the national constitution and character. In both cases the law gives his neighbour greater privileges than it gives him ; but it gives him privileges which, without the Law, could not have been enjoyed and transmitted from generation to generation. Even if the younger brother think the Law more exclusive than it needed to have been in order to obtain its ends, still he may be desirous of supporting it as far better than a law which would, in a few generations, leave the country with its aristocratical element weakened and degraded. And in like manner the dissenter, though seeing many errors and faults in the Established Church, may support it as far better than a condition of the State which would, in a few generations, leave the country with its religious element weakened and corrupted. This view of the Established Church was formerly very commonly prevalent among Dissenters, and I trust has not yet lost its influence. And we may remark, that as this view would induce Dis-

senters to acquiesce in the restrictions and limitations which are necessary for the maintenance of a National Church, it ought also to make the friends of a National Church desire no other exclusions of Dissenters than are really necessary for that purpose.

The form of the National Church in each country is an historical problem. It is to be determined not by any formula applicable alike to all countries and all conditions, but by the progress of the State, acting at every step of its history with a reverence for religion. It is the result of a series of historical events, in each of which men have to decide what is wisest and best;—what most tends to promote the happiness and fulfil the duties of the State, looking upon a moral and religious progress as the highest happiness and the highest duty. It is the last term of a series of decisions made at historical junctures, each of which decisions is a question concerning right and wrong, true and false;—not the product of some arbitrary rule which leaves true and false, right and wrong, out of the question. It must be decided by the internal moral character of the case, not by some external mark.

I state this more distinctly, because some eminent Moralists, in order to avoid the difficulties which belong to the question of an Established Church, have really done that which I say ought not to be attempted. They have given a formula to determine for each nation, not, indeed, what is religious truth, but what is to be taken for it, and established as truth. They have declared that the opinion of the majority of the people is to determine what is the national faith, and what, therefore, is the creed of the National Church. Now we may grant that the National Church has its Nationality incomplete, if it do not, by its teaching and ministrations, draw within its circuit, in the

course of time, the greater part of the people. But to say that the opinion of the majority of the people, for the time being, is to determine what the Governors of the Nation are to establish as the national religion, what they are to cause to be taught, as the national culture, is to reject all difference between truth and error;—between intelligent and deliberate conviction, and blind and casual impression. If we suppose the people of a nation to be rude, ignorant, thoughtless, caring only for material enjoyments, or immersed in some barbarous superstition; and to have among them a small number of enlightened and religious men, we shall see the absurdity of applying this rule of the opinion of the majority. We shall hardly be disposed to deny that in such a case it is the duty of the few to use the power which by the constitution of the country they may possess, in such a way as to communicate intellectual and religious culture to the many. And it would seem that we could not deny that in such a case, the establishment of the teachers of the better faith in every part of the land, with a view to the moral and social improvement of the people, would be a measure fit to form a part of the Polity of wise and benevolent Rulers. It is true, that if the Church of a minority, thus established, fail in its missionary operations;—do not become the instrument of moral and social and religious culture to the great body of the people; wise Rulers may be led to conclude that other means are requisite for the accomplishment of their Duty;—other teaching, at least as subsidiary and introductory to the teaching of religion in its purest and highest form. But even on this supposition, Christian Rulers, believing, what we hold to be the truth, that pure religion is the instrument of the highest national as well as individual progress, can never look upon any condition in which such an instrument is not

the highest part of the national polity as ultimate and satisfactory\*.

I will only add one other remark. The question of the relation of Church and State, with which we are now concerned, is one in which it is extremely difficult to find any phraseology in which we can express political truths in a general form. As Mr. Gladstone says†, "It is not easy to find any single word which accurately describes the relation subsisting between the two societies, in respect of the degree of its intimacy. *Alliance* means too little: it puts out of view too much the Christian conscience of the State, and seems to suppose too great an original distance between the parties . . . The word *Incorporation* would evidently be as much too strong. Even *Union*, though it is on many accounts convenient, may convey too much, if it is understood as making two into one. *Connection* is too indeterminate, but is on the whole for some reasons the most convenient, as more free from risk of misapprehension; while by the term *Relations*, our language enables us to express in the most comprehensive form whatever practices or qualities of the two Societies admit of mutual association."

I may add further, that when we not only use the word *Alliance*, but speak of the *Terms* or *Conditions* of the Alliance between the Church and the State, we convey a very false view of the nature and position of the Church among a Christian people. In such a nation, the Church and the State are not *separate* societies. They are two societies,

\* I have briefly referred to this hypothetical case in the *Morality* (1101, 1102), and have there, perhaps needlessly, added circumstances which give additional complexity to the hypothesis, and increase the difficulty of the question. And indeed, I might repeat here what I have already said, that a hypothetical solution of a question which must essentially be a historical question, is not the best course which a moralist can take.

† *Church and State*, Chap. I., Art. 29.

distinct in their organization, but consisting in a great measure of the same persons. The Christian Church, and the Christian Church which exists in any nation in particular, has for her object the religious improvement of mankind and the salvation of her members. She cannot accept wealth and power as Terms of any Contract ; for wealth and power are no objects of desire to her, except as means of imparting her lessons to men. But then citizens and magistrates, who, being themselves members of the Church, think that such assistance on the part of the State tends to uphold and promote true religion, are desirous that for the teaching of religion there should be supplied by the State opportunities, assistance, means ; in short, the coöperation of the civil authorities. “ We desire,” they say, “ that this country should be divided into parishes ; that each parish should have, secured to it by the State, its Church and its Minister, its School and its Churchman teacher. We desire that the State should aid the Church, in enforcing ecclesiastical discipline among the clergy and others. We desire that our bishops should have a dignity which may place them among the nobles of the land, and a place in the national councils. But we desire these things, not as Christians, but as Englishmen. We desire these things, not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of the State. We desire them, not as good churchmen, but as good citizens. We do not think these things essential to the existence of the Church in England, but we do think them essential to the Christian character of the English State. We do not suppose that if these tokens of the belief of the State in the Church were withdrawn, the Church in England would fall and cease to be, for we know that the Church existed in England before it received those tokens of belief from the State, as it existed in the Roman Empire before it was established in *that* State. We do not desire

to have an Alliance between the Church and the State for the benefit of the Magistrate on the one side, and the Clergy on the other ; but to have the Church established that the State may be Christianized. Hence the privileges and immunities allowed to the Clergy as Clergy ; their maintenance and that of ecclesiastical fabrics by the care of the State ; the dignity of Bishops and their place in Parliament ; —these, and the like provisions, are not properly Terms of an Alliance between the Church and the State, but ecclesiastical laws made by the State as being a Christian State, and being desirous of having the coöperation of the Church in the business of good government.

They are Terms of Alliance between the Church and the State only in the same way in which the Laws of Election of the Members of Parliament, and the Privileges and Functions of the two Houses, are Terms of an Alliance between the Aristocracy and Democracy. Indeed this latter case is more of the nature of an Alliance than the former ; for the Aristocracy and Democracy of the country, though not separable, are yet more distinct than Churchmen and Laymen, since the greater part of Englishmen are both these latter. And in truth, both the National Constitution and the National Church are not results of negotiations and treaties between two parties, but rather they are both of them, and the Church more decidedly, precious boons of Providence, imparting and securing to the nation Civil Liberty and Religious Truth.

THE END.













